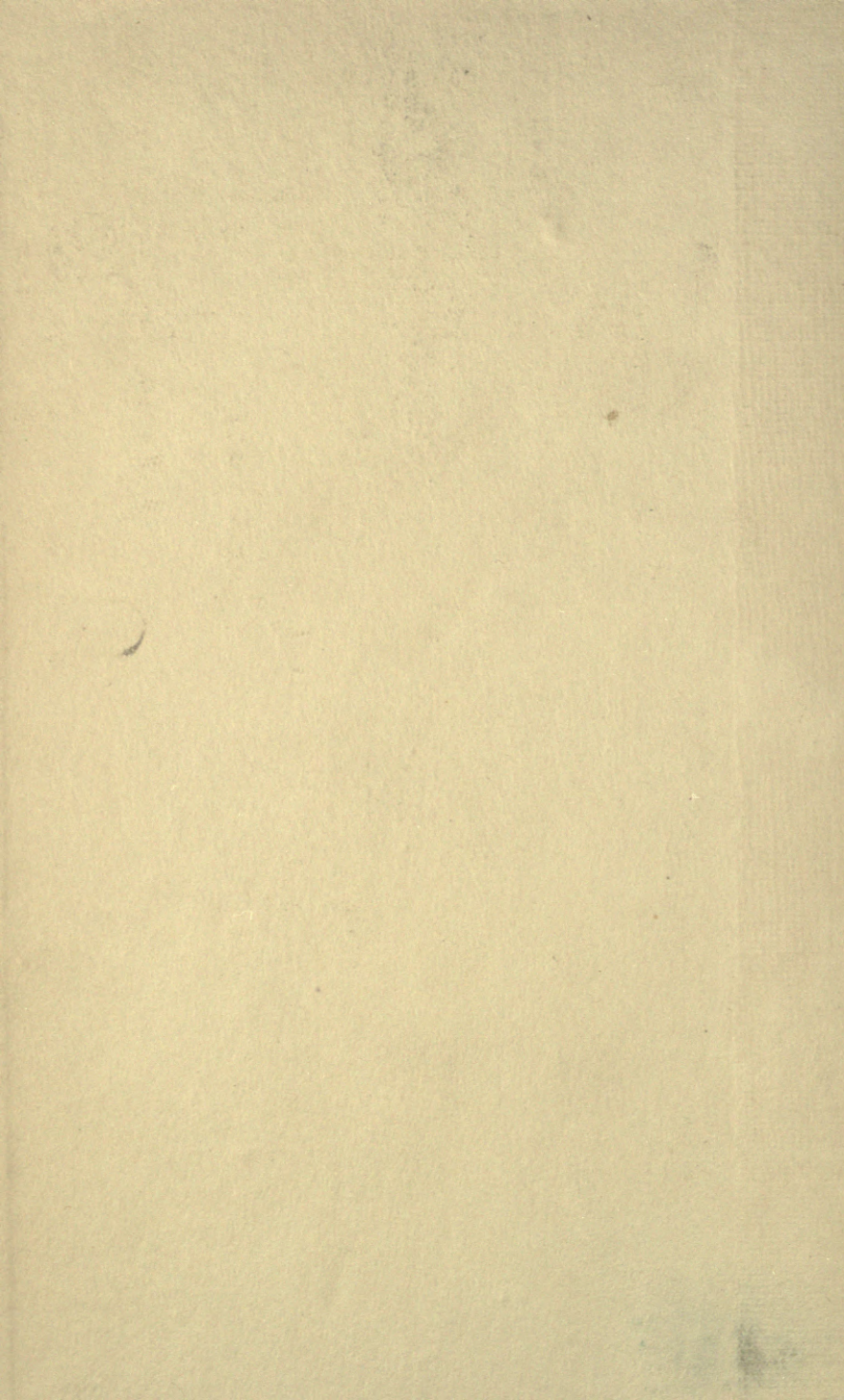
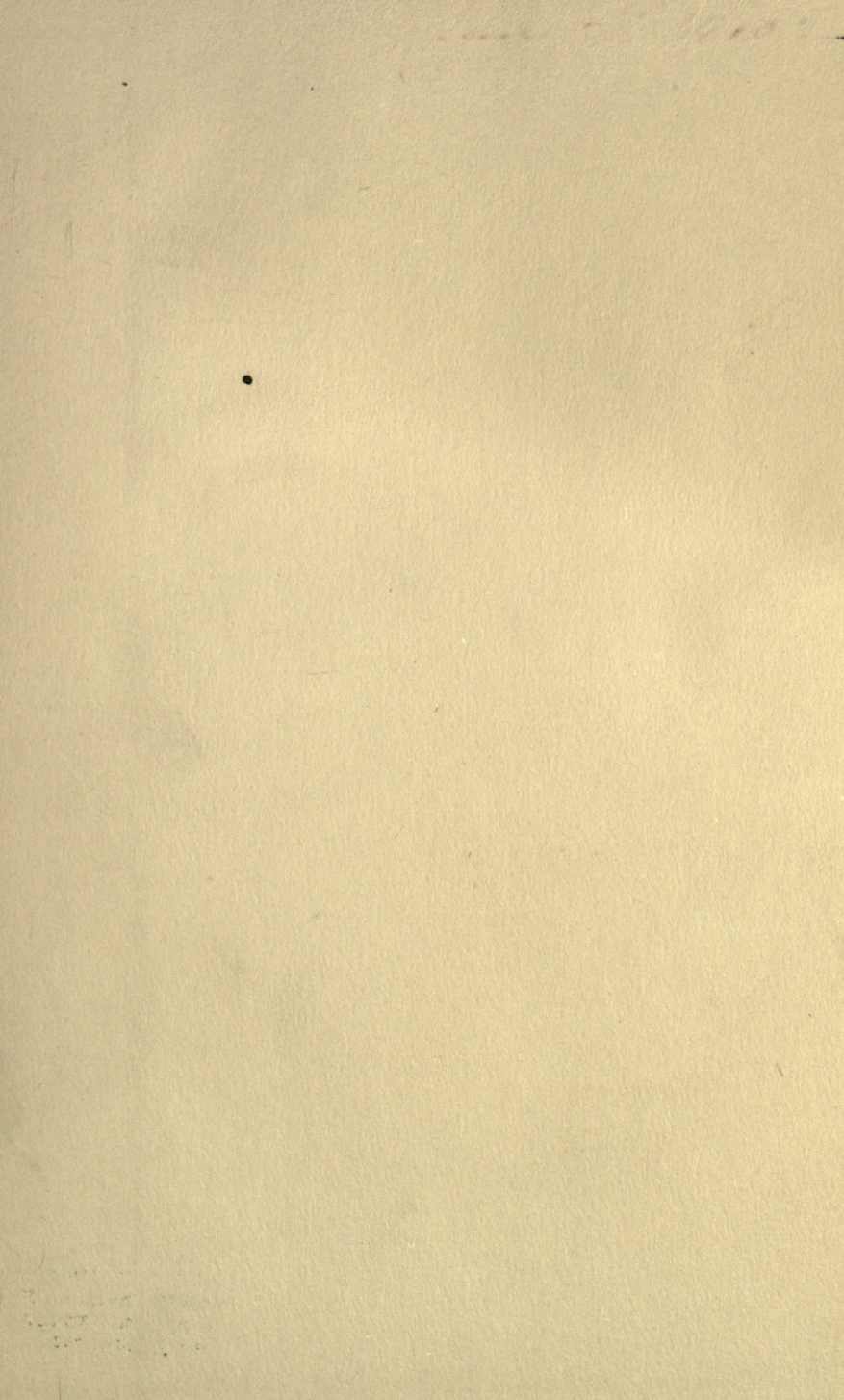


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# CHUMS

OR

An Experiment in Economics

By

D. R. C.

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**Dedicated to My Chums**

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

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In this volume of contemporaneous history the author presents to the public certain messages of cheer, sane wholesome stories of a number of living women and girls who have met and overcome various obstacles in life—obstacles physical, financial, social, affectional. The solutions reached in the stories were actually reached in life: the heroines of the little tales are living heroines, with no melodramatic notions of the heroic, no interest in being exploited. Yet if you will cultivate their acquaintance in these pages, you will gain a new courage and a new interest, whatever your life may be; and you will feel yourself well acquainted with some of the most interesting and entertaining groups of real people to be met anywhere in the world.

NOVEMBER 8, 1907.

G. O. T.





## Workers in the Vineyard



THE early afternoon sun of a May day was pouring into the work room of Martha Farrish, in the college settlement house, falling full upon the mass of flaming red hair, the strong face and square ungraceful figure, simple gown and broad-toed shoes of Martha herself, as she sat at her desk; and every line that told of years of struggle, of overcoming, came out hardly in its unshaded glare, in strong contrast to the dainty figure and beautiful face before her.

"Well, you promised, Mart, to take me sometime and I want to go now!"

The sound of the soft, imperative tone and the sight of the pretty face of Belle English, Martha's young cousin, worked its never failing effect.

"Very well, child. But I *am* so tired of you 'society curious' who just want a new sensation, who get it, are impressed for the moment, then go back to your world and forget. How you *can* do that I cannot fathom. To be sure Bessie Gilbert did go four times to read to blind Lina and sent me a check for a hundred dollars last week to use as I saw fit, but she is the only one who has ever done anything."

"Take the child to see the Potowskis, then to see the Duchess," advised a voice from the further corner of the room, where another woman sat busily sorting over clothes.

Martha's face brightened.

"That's a good suggestion," she said. "Very well, Belle, come tomorrow. No, not today; you are not properly dressed," with a glance of amused disdain; "wear the plainest clothes you have and no jewelry."

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"Why, Mart, this is as simple as can be," interrupted the soft voice.

"Yes, the simplicity of a hundred-and-fifty-dollar tailor made suit, with everything in equal simplicity to correspond."

"Oh, let her wear her prettiest, it will do the eyes of those poor wretches good. They must get tired enough of the sight of our ugly togs," again came the voice from the other corner, with an admiring tone for the dainty brown cloth gown and rosebud toque, for the smart little high-heeled brown shoes and suède-gloved hands.

Martha, with a vexed laugh, was caught by the justice of the remark and said:

"Very well, then, but if there's a mobbing in Kidder's Alley and Belle is the cause, I shall have the satisfaction of saying 'I told you so'; however, you must leave your gold purse and your watch and pin here."

A half-hour later they found themselves in the "Alley," and finally, after going through a dark, narrow tunnel, came out on the small paved court of a back tenement. Belle held her skirts high and looked a little dismayed as they crossed, picking their way between the heaps of scattered garbage and awful litter of the place, over the green slimy stones and up two rickety pairs of wooden stairs, whose railing was a greasy, worn rope. At the top of the second flight they stood upon a narrow landing, and feeling along the panel of the sagging door, Martha turned the handle and they saw a low ceiled, dingy room with one window, whose light was partly obscured by having three of the six panes filled with old rags to protect from any possible letting in of much-needed air. They were greeted by the hollow cough of a woman, half lying, half leaning on a low wooden bedstead. Other furniture the room had none, except for the machine in front of the window and a soap box on end to serve as seat.

Gathered around the woman were five tiny children

## WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

(the oldest but six, and the two youngest twins, less than a year) eating their lunch, if lunch it could be called—some yellow Indian corn mush and bluish milk which their mother was feeding them from a smoked and handleless saucepan.

Belle's face paled and her eyes grew strangely large as she looked upon the pitiful scene, the first of its kind that she had ever in her pampered and guarded life come in contact with.

Martha spoke gently to the woman, at the same time opening a basket which she had brought and giving each child a well buttered roll. Pouring fresh milk into a cup from the bottle in the basket, she took the tiniest of the twins upon her lap and began feeding it.

The worn, pathetic face of the poor woman lighted up and the great mournful eyes were filled with thankfulness as she said:

"Ah, Miss Martha, what would we do if it were not for you. I've been so bad with my cough that I have not been able to finish those last vests"—pointing discouragedly to a pile of cut and basted vests resting on a newspaper by the machine—"and last night I had to send Gita to ask Mrs. Malone to come to me. I thought I was dying."

Martha looked pityingly at her as she said:

"Poor dear, if you would let me send two of the babies to the Institute it would be easier for you."

"No, no," eagerly retorted the woman, sitting erect, "I shall be all right soon, and I can't let my babies go—I'd lose heart."

"Has your husband still nothing to do, Mrs. Potowski?" she asked.

The woman shook her head.

"Only odd jobs, and they don't hardly pay the rent, and he gets so downhearted he keeps away most times, but he's not a bad man," eagerly, "you know that, Miss Martha, only his luck has been just the worst kind."



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Martha nodded, and taking some tea and a small package of sugar out of the basket she turned to Gita and asked:

“Will you see if the Duchess will lend us her kettle if it’s boiling, dear, and I will make mother a cup of tea.”

The little, quiet child went quickly out of the room and soon returned with a small teakettle of boiling water, which she held carefully, and Martha put some tea to steep in an old pot and gave the mother a great cup of it presently.

All this time the little ones were being fed intermittently, like so many hungry little birds, and Belle, standing on one side, watched it all, feeling useless and helpless in the sight of this misery, while Martha went on in her practical, helping way until even those hungry little mouths ceased to open for more, and the mother, warmed and comforted by the tea and help, looked less pinched and awful; but the smell of the close room, the disorder and dirt was rapidly becoming too much for Belle, and Martha, seeing it, said,—

“Belle, dear, if you will go along the passage to the Duchess’s room and tell her I will be there soon, I shall be obliged. Here!” giving her the basket now nearly empty, “take this, too, I will straighten up a bit here first and then follow you.”

Blindly Belle did as directed and, stumbling along the dark hall, knocked at a door at the end, which was opened by a little, fresh-faced old woman whose abundant white hair was gathered neatly up on her head, whose print frock was spotlessly clean and whose small hands were busily engaged in knitting even as she stood waiting.

Belle looked at her wildly a moment, then around at the clean, pretty room, saying,—

“Oh, it was awful! awful!” and burst into tears and leaned against the wall.

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"Yes, dear; yes, dear," said the little woman, "come and sit down awhile." And she led her to a low rocker before the open window and gently took off the pretty rosebud toque, looking at it in rapt admiration as she put it aside, and drawing the fluffy head to her, smoothed the forehead and soothed her.

Presently Belle stopped crying and looked up into the kind brown eyes, saying,—

"And you live here, too! Why, one would think the rooms a mile apart from the difference," her eyes wandering about.

"Yes, I live here, too, my dear, and they call me the Duchess," the small woman answered. "I understand you have been to see the Potowskis and you are not used to such sights; poor woman, but it is a hard case. A good-for-nothing Polish husband, who pawns everything she buys with her hard-earned money, and leaves them for weeks at a time without a cent, and all of those pretty babies to do for. Only seven years ago she was a handsome, fresh young creature and they had a nice little home; but he got in with a bad lot and she had her babies so fast that her health broke down; only this year since the twins came has she let anyone help her, but now the pride has broken and if it were not for Miss Farrish and a few of us others, she and her babies would be worse off than they are, if that could be."

Belle looked at her wonderingly and again at the pretty room. A smile came over the face of the old woman as she read the thought.

"Well, dearie, we have fixed up the room over there several times, but the husband always pawns everything. This time he did not leave even the stove. That is why Gita came to me for boiling water. I suppose the only reason the machine remains is because when the poor thing's cough is not too bad she can earn a few dollars with it."

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Just then Martha came in, looked keenly at Belle and the old woman, guessed how things were and commenced brightly,—

“Well, I’ve tidied up a bit and washed those blessed babies’ hands and faces. What pretty things they are. I was surprised to find that their curls were clean, and their little bodies. That’s your doing, Duchess,” she added, smiling. “Mrs. Potowski told me you coaxed them all in and gave them good warm baths and their suppers three times a week. Now the tubs are all right; water, even warm water, does not cost much, but I want to know how much you have spent on food since I was here two weeks ago. That part of it is my work. No!” as the old woman started to demur, “I can do this, for I have been sent a check for a hundred quite recently and I’ll use it for them. That poor woman, I’m afraid, cannot last long. Then it will have to be decided what is to be done with those cherubs. Ah!” with a longing sigh, “would I not love to have them!”

The Duchess laughed and, putting a hand on the broad shoulder, said,—

“Vous êtes une vrai femme, ma chère.”

Belle glanced from one to the other in amazement. Truly this afternoon was being filled with experiences.

“Well, Belle dear, your first experience has been too much for you, I see,” said Martha, and Belle flushed and her lip trembled.

“Now, Miss Farrish, don’t tease the child. This is her first sight of trouble, I am certain, and that is a pretty terrible sight—not to mention smell,” she added. “I wonder why it is all of the poor things are so afraid of fresh air, or *outer* air, I suppose would be more to the point.”

Belle asked if she might have a glass of water and the Duchess said,—

“Let me make you some tea; I am sure Miss Farrish wants hers, and it is my tea time, too.”

She bustled about, set a little table with a pretty tray—



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cloth and blue and white china, sliced a lemon, and boiled a kettle over a bit of charcoal in a Japanese Hebachi, saying,—

“Now, come and have as good a cup of tea as can be found anywhere, for this tea chest”—holding up a small caddy—“is filled with Formosa’s best, my one extravagance. I have nothing to offer you to eat, my dears, but,” smiling at Belle, “I fancy this one does not want to eat just now.”

Belle nodded and Martha said as she sipped her tea,—

“Duchess, you are a wonder. I wish I had your intuition and tact. I am such a great, blundering thing.”

The little Duchess patted Martha’s hand softly, and said,—

“Ah, my dear, when you are close on to seventy you will have many more good deeds to look back upon than I. I never awakened to this side of life until I was sixty, but I am no end grateful that I *did* awaken.”

Belle started eagerly to say something, then flushed and hesitated.

“Out with it, my dear. Out with it,” the little old lady said, but Belle only shook her head and looked embarrassed, so the Duchess smiled again at her and began to talk to Martha, giving an account of her various commissions for the Settlement, and checking off from a fat little account book the various sums spent.

Belle listened, feeling *herself, too*, awakened, and wondering if she could ever again go back to that easy, joyous, unthinking life, since she had had this glimpse of the “other side.” She felt as though every pretty dress and bit of frivolity would seem a theft, and why such women as her cousin Martha had found it impossible to lead empty, useless lives she now realized; in only a slight degree, however, for youth appropriates as its own the gifts life holds, and the charm and grace of her home surroundings were only what she had always known.

As Martha and the Duchess discussed Mrs. Malone’s

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rheumatism, which kept her home from her charring too often for hard times to be kept away from the Malone household; old Pat Drogen's bad leg and worse back; how the clothes were to be distributed to the Finly family; and as both were bemoaning the scarcity of funds, there was a knock at the door. In answer to the Duchess's "come in" a great, broad-shouldered young man opened the door and stood in the doorway completely blocking it, stooping a little that the door frame might not hit his head. He was dressed in clerical black, with a wide-brimmed hat held in his hand, together with a black bag such as physicians carry, and he beamed in upon them.

Both Martha and the Duchess rose to greet him, and Martha introduced him to Belle as the Reverend Dr. Holding. The broad hand grasped Belle's with warmth and cordiality, as he said,—

"Glad to meet you, Miss English, I have heard of you from Miss Farrish, often; making calls with her this afternoon, or only a call?"

Belle told him her experience and he looked sympathetically at her and, as he took his tea cup from the Duchess, said,—

"Evidently Miss Farrish believes in contrasts that she takes you on the same day to see the Potowskis and our Duchess; sort of antidote for the poison, eh?"

And again the conversation drifted back to the help this or that one needed, and the ever-recurring note of self-abnegation struck in all unconsciousness, but struck and struck again, startled Belle.

She had an opportunity to look at the big missionary, without his noticing it, and she saw with admiration the great frame, the fine, strong, ugly face, whose redeeming feature was the mouth, with its laugh lines and its strong white teeth. Here was no delicate divine, but a member of the church militant, ready to fight in all ways if fighting were necessary; strongly tender when occa-

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sion demanded, and filled with a ready and understanding sympathy for poor, weak humanity's trippings and staggerings; and Belle contrasted him with the men of her world, not to their advantage.

Presently, the conference ending, Martha said, looking at her watch,—

"I must just look in at Mrs. Malone a moment, then we will go home."

Bidding adieu to the little Duchess and accompanied by Dr. Holding, they went down to the first landing, where they said good bye to him. They knocked upon the door of the room under Mrs. Potowski's, a voice bade them come in and they entered.

A red-faced, kindly-looking woman of middle age was sitting at the window, patching a garment. She rose at sight of Miss Farrish, in bustling welcome.

"Glory be! but 'tis yourself I'm glad to see, for I have news from my Tim, and I wanted to tell you of it."

Martha introduced her cousin, and Mrs. Malone gave them each a chair, and after seating herself again, began rapidly to tell Martha,—

"Now, Tim had written he had a foine job, foine intoirely, and would send his mother tin dollars a month, right along now, and in six months would be able to take Mickey with him. And then, with Sadie getting three a week and Neddy four, with what she earned, they could do finely. As to the little ones, the creatures was so good, they was no bother or cost at all!"

Whilst Mrs. Malone was talking, Belle looked about her.

This room was moderately clean and tidy, had two turn-up beds, a stove in the fireplace, four chairs, a table and a big chest of drawers, with a tea service in florid pattern upon it, a clock, a work basket, a plush-covered album, and an image of St. Joseph. Altogether decent and comfortable. Belle's heart grew lighter.



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Surely that case upstairs was an exceptional one. There could not be many such in the world, she thought.

After they had left Mrs. Malone and were once more picking their way across the court, Belle told Martha her thought and Martha's strong face saddened as she said,—

“Wrong, dear. It's the other way about. Mrs. Malone is the exception, that is, in this kind of a neighborhood.”

When they reached the settlement house, Belle said, breaking the silence that had endured since Martha's answer to her question,—

“What does Dr. Holding do, Martha?”

“Do!” her cousin answered. “What does he not do? Works like ten. Is at the call of everyone. Doctors the sick. Gives his time and strength to them all. Teaches in the evening schools, preaches on Sundays, influences the boys to take up trades and drop rowdyism. Gives every cent of his own, except what he needs for bare existence, and begs from his friends to help along the cause. He's wonderful!” with a sigh—“How I wish I were a man! There are so many more ways for a man to be of use. He was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, too, and might now be living in luxury if he chose, but his father turned him off when he would not give up what the old gentleman termed ‘his low ideas’, and has never seen him since. About seven years ago that was.”

Belle asked as they went into the room,—

“And Mart, who is the Duchess?”

“I've been waiting for that question,”—Martha laughed. “Well, my dear, no one knows. About seven years ago, shortly after Dr. Holding came into the work, she took that room she is in now, and because she was so clean and dainty the name of the ‘Duchess’ was given her, and has, as you notice, stuck. I believe her name is Mrs. Church. She has a tiny, tiny income and yet keeps

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herself, her room and her possessions as you saw them today, and is always doing kind services and actually, out of her scant means, being of real practical help in the neighborhood. Everyone in it loves her and she is our right hand in distributing.

Did you notice her books?"

"Yes."

"Well, they are in French, German, Spanish and Italian, each of which she speaks fluently, and Dr. Holding says she is the very *best* read woman he has ever met, and the most traveled.

She talks quite freely of her 'roamings,' as she calls them, but never of herself, and no one has ever dared question her. I have always suspected a romance—Oh, I don't necessarily mean a love affair, at her age," with a smile as Belle's eyes opened, "but a romance of life; a full life, a rounded life. But there, child, you must run along. Here are your trinkets and I hope you have satisfied your curiosity."

Belle took the little gold purse and, opening it, poured its contents on the desk,—a couple of ten-dollar gold-pieces, a twenty-dollar bill and some silver; she carefully put back a quarter, clicked shut the purse and pushed the little pile of money towards her cousin.

"You are to use this for the babies, Martha," she said.

"No, no, child. I can't take your money. Your father has been very generous to us, and considering he thinks me insane and all of us fools, I must add, *very, very* generous."

Belle insisted and was so hurt and grieved that Martha weakened and put the money in her drawer.

"Well, after all, you can spare it," she said, "and oh, my poor, poor people need help so much."

"I am coming next week to go again, Mart," Belle said.

Martha smiled rather unconvincedly, and Belle added,—

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"You just wait and see. I mean it and I am going on a begging expedition between now and then, and I shall loom up burdened with spoils."

Just then Mary Tobin came into the room and asked,—

"How did my suggestion work, did you take both my poison and its antidote?"

Belle and Martha both looked up in surprise.

"Why, that's the expression Dr. Holding used," cried Belle.

"Oh, so you saw him, did you?" Mary remarked, with a keen glance at Martha, who had turned to the window,—*"Splendid champion of the Lord's, is he not? Pity all of the Lord's workers are not like him."*

Belle expressed her liking and then told of the afternoon and of her breakdown, over which Mary laughed, and finally said good bye and left, accompanied by one of the settlement workers to the Fifth Avenue Stage.

For a few moments Mary busied herself at her table, then went over to the desk where Martha was now busy, and putting her hand on the broad shoulder, said,—

"What is it, honey?" with infinite tenderness. Martha looked up affectionately, then laughed half grudgingly,—

"You are such a spooky, mind-reading thing, I suppose I can't say 'nothing' to you and be believed, but I am a little ashamed of what it is, and so if you don't mind, chum, I will not 'fess up' this time."

"Better," said Mary, looking into the clear, gray eyes understandingly, sympathetically.

Martha shook her head and Mary said no more on the subject, but spoke of certain interests of the settlement and presently they went into the little, bare dining-room, whose only grace was its exquisite cleanliness, and had their simple meal, the usual feminine one of tea and more tea, bread and butter and a salad, with a custard pudding for dessert.



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When Belle reached home it was nearly six and, as the butler opened the door, she asked,—

“Father home yet, Robbins?”

“Not yet, Miss,” was the answer,—and Belle ran lightly up the stairs and went into her room, where her maid, a sharp-faced Frenchwoman, was laying out an evening dress.

“I’ll tub first, Janette.” And as Janette looked down at her dress,—“You may send this to the cleaner’s. I’ve been down to the settlement and got it queer—it smells funny,” sniffing at her jacket as she took it off.

An hour later as Belle, in her pretty lace gown, sat at the dinner table opposite her father, whose heavy, hard face softened with pride and affection as he looked at her, she told of the afternoon.

“Now, Daddy dear,” she said coaxingly, seeing his frown,—“don’t scold, Mart didn’t want to take me and I just insisted, and no harm’s done. I have told Janette to send my suit to the cleaner’s, and had a bath”—with a laugh—“so I don’t bring any infection—besides where the settlement workers go I suppose I can.”

Her father brought his first down smartly on the table, as he said,—

“I won’t have it! Belle, I won’t have it! It’s all very well for those people if they want to go messing about in that filth and rottenness, but you sha’n’t be inveigled into any such nonsense. I give plenty to charity and they are free to spend it as they think best, but I won’t have you going to those places and risking all sorts of dangers. I won’t have it.” The veins stood out on his thick neck, and the hard face looked stony.

“All right, Daddy dear,” was all Belle said, and tactfully turned the talk to other things until she had restored his temper and he was once more smiling at her.

They were a strange contrast, these two,—she such a pretty, soft, almost frail girl; he, broad and heavy, with strong, hard face and potentialities for sheer violence. It



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was difficult to believe them father and daughter. Nature does queer things oftentimes in her human soul shuffling, but in spite of the apparent difference between these two, there was a wonderful mutual love. There always had been since Belle's very earliest remembrance, when, motherless, she lavished all of her babyish affection on this hard man, never fearing him, even when his temper burst its bounds, always demanding, as though by right supreme, his love, tenderness and companionship. So, as the years slipped away they had grown very near, and up to now seemed perfectly satisfied with each other's love and asked little of the world's society.

There had come moments of pain-racking torture to the father at the thought of his darling's some day leaving him and he watched with jealous eyes each new acquaintance, fearing to find in him a possible suitor for Belle, but so far she appeared perfectly heart free, charming, gay, vivacious. All were treated alike and she showed far more pleasure to be with "Dad" than ever to be with any of the many men whom her youth, beauty and reputed wealth attracted to her.

She reigned over the great house, with its many servants, with a dignity and practical efficiency remarkable in one so young. Her servants, one and all, adored her. Her friends, girls and men, loved and admired her, for her kindly, tactful manner and her sunshiny disposition knew no shadows.

She had all kinds of little housewifely gifts and was so clever with her fingers in trimming hats and rearranging clothes, that her best friend, Sallie Cortland, who was as poor as the proverbial church mouse, would say enviously,—

"Belle, it's a sheer waste of good material your being so outrageously rich. With all of your gifts you ought to be the eldest daughter of a poor clergyman. Now, here am I—never a dollar to bless myself with, and absolutely no gifts for doing 'something with nothing'; and you,

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fairly rioting in wealth and not needing it one bit! You ought to lose all your money and be obliged to exert those talents; but you never will have to. You are born to be lucky and have everything. You'll marry a man rolling in wealth, have, as ever, a retinue of servants and go the way of all your kind; and I, who fairly pine for a maid, who adore lovely things in which clothes, lovely clothes, dreams of clothes are included, shall probably marry a man who has not a cent, and have to scrimp to the end of the chapter."

Belle gathered together her girl friends one day shortly after her visit with her cousin, to beg their help in getting together a big box of goodies for the folk of Cat Alley.

Not daring to go to the settlement so soon after her father's decided protest, she wrote a letter to Martha, telling her of the new club whose members were to meet each Thursday to sew for the settlement protégés. She sent with the note a great basket of jellies and wine, to be used for the sick people.

Martha answered with a note of thanks and told her to obey her father, who was quite right in his decision, and enclosed a list of things for the club to work on,—all plain, strong, useful articles.

Belle showed the note to her father, who said after he had read it,—

"Sensible girl, Martha, in most ways, but why she could not stay in her own place, I never could understand. I've no objection to your doing anything you wish to help her poor folks, so long as you keep away from them yourself, and I will give you fifty dollars to buy the stuff you think you want to work on, but I fancy when your fine young lady friends have done a few gingham pinafores and red flannel petticoats, their enthusiasm will 'peter out.'"

Belle privately feared so, too, and her fears were realized. After the fourth meeting there was a perceptible

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dropping off of attendance and at the end of six weeks Belle and Sally Cortland were the only ones when the club day came around.

They finished the articles that had been commenced, and, packing them in a box, Belle sent them to Martha with the remainder of the material and twenty dollars. She wrote a note telling of the fall of her hopes and said that she would come in some day for tea, as her father had not forbidden her to go to the settlement house, only to "do no more visiting."

Martha smiled grimly, when the box and note came, and read the letter to Mary Tobin and the big doctor, who were there. A laugh went round and Mary said,—

"Well, you cannot blame her father. There is no doubt of the fact that she might catch something and she is the very apple of his eye, pretty thing! But it is too bad, for the sight of so much freshness and prettiness is as good as a meal, Mrs. Malone says, and they have all enquired after the 'pretty lady'."

"I never could see why freshness and prettiness, as you term them, could not do the world's work and do it well. Surely such gifts are to be used for something besides mere joy of the eye," Martha said.

Mary looked at her a moment and then answered,—

"My dear Martha, the world's work is rather varied if you come to think of it. I have noticed that old Dame Nature knows her business a bit, and sorts natures and conditions so that they match, most times, any way. When there are exceptions they only prove the rule. To the pretty, soft, dimpled women generally fall the circumstances where all of that can be used to advantage, and we, the workers, get good, plain, serviceable bodies and features. I have had a good many years in the work and I have yet to know of one pretty worker who was of any use, or remained a worker."

Martha smiled and the doctor laughed.

Just then there burst into the room a small, disheveled



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and grimy child, whose eyes were round with excitement and whose shrill voice called,—

“Oh, Miss Martha, Miss Martha, come quick, de baby’s got ’em again!” then, turning, disappeared and her steps could be heard running along the hall.

“Here, Mart, you’re too tired to go out; I’ll go. I suppose that poor baby of the Dugan’s is in convulsions again; probably this time they have been feeding it over-ripe fish, for a change,” said Mary. “Don’t wait, Doctor, I’ll be along as soon as I can get my basket ready. No, Martha, you cannot go. You are worn to a frazzle. Stay home, that’s a dear, and go ‘by-by.’ I’ll do for once, I fancy, although they don’t like me as well over in Cat Alley; you spoil ’em.

The room that Mary Tobin found the doctor in was one typical of the quarter: small, dirty, crowded and stifling, with the combined odors of unwashed humanity, stale cooking and the steam from a kettle of boiling clothes.

The doctor glanced up as she came in and said,—

“Open those windows wide and then come and help me. These poor things are of no use,” pointing to the mother and sister of the baby.

They worked over the small convulsed form until the paroxysms were conquered and the lips took on a pinkness and the nostrils lost the pinched look. Then, wrapping the child in a soft cotton gown Mary had brought, the doctor put it on the miserable bed, saying to the mother,—

“Now, Mrs. Dugan, baby’s escaped again, but I warn you that you will lose her if you do not do as I direct.”

“But, Doctor, dear, ’twas but a bit of watermelon rind that cool and nice for her gums.”

Mary and the doctor exchanged glances of despair and Mary said,—

“There! run along, Doctor; I know you have more calls to make and I will stay awhile. No, don’t close that

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window, Mrs. Dugan, the air is awful in here. Why have you the windows closed anyway, on such a warm day?"

"Sure, Miss Mary, the air is bad for sickness. Me mother did be always keepin' us well covered whin we ailed, and she had twilve of us." This last rather sulkily.

Mary looked about the room.

"Where's the new rocker, and the dishpan and pots and pans and dishes?"

Mrs. Dugan flushed up and began an explanation whose inarticulateness was heightened by the fact that she was sniffing behind her apron, and all that Miss Tobin could catch was,—

"Me man,—wid the drink,—and ticket in the race."

Mary sighed, it was all so old a story,—ignorance, shiftlessness, dirt and drink. Cause and effect had been lost sight of so long ago.

Mary, sometimes, when she was tired and disheartened, wondered if all of the effort she and others like her put forth was ever to bear fruit. Now her eyes traveled around the dirty, unkempt room that only the month before she and Martha had made comfortable and clean, hoping that by arousing the sense of possession, the pride in actual ownership, they might get this poor woman to take one step up. Evidently it was not in her to be helped or lifted.

"Well, Mrs. Dugan, stop crying and listen to what I tell you. You *must* keep strictly to the diet the doctor prescribed for the baby, and if Ellen will come over to the mission every morning at eight I will send you baby's milk for the day. Then, all you will have to do will be to warm it and keep her bottles clean. Let me see her bottle."

Ellen burrowed under the heap of things on the bed and dragged out a nursing-bottle, the contents of which seemed congealed and gave out a fetid, sour odor. Miss Mary took off the rubber nipple and, slipping it inside out, exposed a greenish coating so thick that the tiny holes were stopped.

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"Good heavens!" was all she said as she held it up accusingly. "After all I have told you and warned you of the necessity of keeping these clean! Where are the others?"

The mother was frightened into truthfulness and answered,—

"'Tis broke they are." And the soft, dirty, once pretty face looked so frightened and helpless that Mary said no more.

"Now, Mrs. Dugan, I shall have to report you to the Society and have baby taken away. You will certainly kill her with such utter neglect."

Once again going over the directions, she left, taking the bottle and its contents with her, to show to Martha and the doctor, later; and doing up two fresh bottles and nipples and a sufficient amount of milk for the baby for the night, she sent them back by little Ellen, who had accompanied her to the settlement house, and who was rewarded with a thick piece of bread and butter and a bowl of soup, after first having her dirty little face and hands washed and the mop of curls tied back.

As they sat down to their supper awhile later Mary said, when she had finished recounting the events in the Dugan menage,—

"Martha, do you think that we can make any impression on this great mass of people like the Dugans? Truly there are times when I doubt it. I believe the only hope lies in the Kindergarten work. The children will have to do the work in the homes. Oh, of course, we do save some people, but not many. I saw the Duchess this afternoon and she was full of joy over the Malones and their bit of luck; but they are an exception to the rule, any way, and only prove what I say. Funny, isn't it, how we keep on in spite of the horrors of it all? Although I get rabid over things, still I know perfectly well I could not give it up and go back to the old life; and you're worse, if anything.

Uncle Theodore once told me that I was a born dic-



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tator and as I could not 'boss the job' in my own position in life, I had taken up this, and that if the truth were known all of the people I work for wish I would mind my own business. Poor little Mrs. Dugan, today, I know thought I was distinctly not minding my business when I rated her soundly for the baby's milk bottle. Oh, it's all a bit of a muddle."

One afternoon Belle English came into the room as Martha, Mary and the doctor were having tea, and gave a most amusing account of her trials at home with the sewing society and her father's obduracy in regard to the district visiting.

"Truly, Mart, I do want to be of some use," she said, after they had laughed with her.

"Well, you are of use, my dear. You are doing your duty in that condition of life that Providence has placed you in."

"But, Mart, you were placed in the same condition and you did not think it held work."

"Oh, that was quite different, child,—I was absolutely alone; no nearer relatives than second cousins. You have your father, and then, besides, all of my desires pointed settlementwards. I wanted to get into the arena and fight."

"No, he says"—then flushing hotly as she remembered what her father *had* said, she stopped and Martha laughed.

"Never mind, dear, your father has his point of view, and as he is the best father in the world to you, you cannot go against him; but if you want work so badly I can perhaps give you some to do in a quarter that Uncle will not mind your visiting. It's up in Harlem. And whilst it is not picturesquely, shudderingly awful, as you describe the other, it has almost greater possibilities—along other lines."

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The doctor got up and went over to the window abruptly and Mary looked up inquiringly at Martha.

"It is a case of great interest to me and if it were not that I love you I would not turn it over to you," Martha continued. "If you wish, I will take you with me tomorrow. You may ask me to luncheon, I feel rather in the mood to be waited on by a butler, and dear old Robbins will think I'm a brand plucked from the burning—poor old chap, how he has hated to have me down here; old Jane comes to see me occasionally and never fails to tell me that 'any time I get tired of this' Robbins will get together an establishment for me. My private opinion is, Belle, that Robbins intends on that auspicious day to leave you and come to me."

"Oh, I've known that, always," laughed Belle. "Well, then, Mart, it's tomorrow at twelve-thirty; after that we go to your protégé—or my protégé—you're a dear! and I will be so attentive to her she will hate to get well. I must rush now, for I have to stop in at Sally's before I go home."

After Belle had left, Martha said,—

"What is it, Doctor? *You* evidently do not approve of my giving Belle my poor Elsie to brighten up."

The doctor looked distressed and finally answered,—

"Well, no; for the moment I am not quite certain it is best. Miss Belle's charming girlishness—and—eh—innocence"—

"Now, see here, Doctor,"—Mary spoke up, interrupting him—"What I am going to say might seem an impertinence coming from anyone but one of your co-workers, but if Belle English were slab-sided, lantern-jawed and squint-eyed, *do* you think you would be so distressed at the possibility of her what-you-term innocence being troubled?"

The doctor turned red and then shouted, and Martha could not refrain from a smile.

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"My dear Mary, you go straight to the point, don't you? I am properly abashed and see now that you are quite right and I quite wrong.

"But," laughed Mary, "like the other one, convinced against your will,—eh?"

At twelve Martha Farrish rang the bell and Robbins opened the door, beaming deferentially, and ushered her up to Belle's sitting-room.

"Oh, Mart, I am so glad you have come. I don't in the least know what to wear. I want to be suitable, and you told me so little I did not know what *was* suitable. Now, I see," looking at Martha's golden brown tweed.

As they drove up-town after lunch, Belle said,—

"Now, tell me about this sick girl, Martha."

"It is a sad story, dear, and an old one. Elsie McDondald is just twenty-one. She worked in a shop as a maker of bows and neck trimmings, kept her mother,—who is badly crippled with rheumatism,—and a ten-year-old brother.

About a year ago she met a man who professed to love her. She was proud of her conquest (he is much above her socially) and grew to love him in return. When he claimed it impossible to marry her for a year, for family reasons, she trusted him to keep his promise to marry her when the year was up, and lived with him. Her baby was born about three weeks ago.

The man has tired of her and refuses to keep his promise and Elsie is facing a hard future. He sent her a thousand dollars, which she returned; and now she is struggling through her convalescence as best she can. They have a trifle put by, but only a trifle, and the winter is coming on."

Belle's lovely face was quite white and her pretty teeth shut with a snap as she said,—

"The brute! the brute!"

They climbed the four flights to the tiny flat, and Martha left Belle in the hall whilst she went inside.



## WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

Presently she called to her and Belle went into what had been the sitting room or parlor, before the illness, but which had been converted into a bedroom. The air was fresh, both windows being widely opened, and the simple furniture was pretty and in good taste. There were two well filled book cases, an upright piano in the corner, several etchings on the walls and a few good photographs.

On a couch bed, bolstered up with pillows, lay the girl, and from a bundle beside her appeared a tiny face and two small, wavering fists.

There were bright spots on the thin cheeks of the young mother and her pretty eyes held a defiant look, but Belle greeted her charmingly and begged to hold the baby. Martha saw, at the end of a few minutes, that there was to be no awkwardness, and so left the room to find the older woman. Belle's evident admiration of, and joy in, the baby was pretty to see, and by the time Martha returned to the room Belle and Elsie had forgotten difference of position and were chatting together, whilst Belle snuggled the wee baby to her cheek and Elsie's clever fingers twisted and tied the ribbon she was at work on.

Martha said,—

“It will be another month before you can go back to work, Elsie, and even then I do not see how the grandmother is to look after baby—in the condition she is in. If you could get enough work to do at home, that would, of course, be best.”

“You *are* awfully good, Miss Martha,” said Elsie, “but I do not think it can be managed. You see, one of the reasons I get such good pay at ——— & Co.'s is because I am on hand to do things. You would be surprised to know how much a customer is influenced to buy expensive ribbons by seeing other women buying and watching me make them up. Then, between times, I can do hurry-up orders. Being miles away from the

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shop, I could do only stock work, which would not pay; but if you could find me a nice little girl, who was steady and quiet, to come and help mother with "Blessing"—

"Oh, is that what you have named Baby?" exclaimed Belle, quick tears coming to her eyes.

"Yes, she is my blessing, and so I've called her—poor darling, she shall have double love from me to make up to her for not having a decent father."

Martha knew of a twelve-year-old girl, who she thought would be just what was needed, and promised to arrange it so that by the time Elsie went back to work there would be someone to help with the baby. Presently, after they had had tea, served very daintily from a pretty service of some oriental ware, and Martha had told of some of the recent amusing happenings in Cat Alley, they took their departure.

Martha kissed the pretty mouth Elsie turned to her, saying,—

"There, child, I do hope we have not stayed too long and talked too much," and Belle pressed the small hand and asked if she might come again, as she put the little bundle in Elsie's arms. They made their way down to the street in silence. Belle was the first to speak.

"Mart, I am awfully glad you took me and I think Elsie is lovely—really lovely, not only pretty; whilst you were out of the room she told me a good deal about what she intends to do and her attitude is so fine. She says that she shall not make any attempt to hide the truth, but take her 'medicine.' Truly, I think she is remarkably strong."

"Belle, dear, in admiration of the sinner, who is I admit most lovable, do not forget the sin. Of course it is rankly unfair that all of the agony, sorrow and humiliation should fall upon her, but it is the penalty, and society will make her pay to the last farthing. Did she tell you that they had notice to leave their flat?"

"No. Oh, how mean!"

Martha smiled at the outburst. "I want you to look

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up a flat for them. I will give you the list I have. It will be a great help, for I *am* busy just now and they must leave by the first, two weeks off. The neighborhoods are quite decent and you can take Sally or one of the other girls with you and go fearlessly. My only fear is that they are too respectable and will, in consequence, be prying. However, we can but try—will you go this week?"

"Yes, Mart. I'll take Sally and go tomorrow and I am going to up to see Elsie again this week. I need some new stocks and she can make them for me; and I feel as though I could not stay away from that baby; did you ever see such a dear?"

Martha smiled indulgently and kissed Belle good-bye at the door, refusing to go in, pleading "things to do."

When she arrived at the settlement house she was met at the door by Mary, who, finger on lip, pulled her inside the small room at the right of the hall and whispered,—

"Mrs. Finn, Mrs. Mullaly and Mrs. O'Brien are waiting for you. I thought I'd best see you first and prepare you."

Martha sighed and stood in thought a moment before she went into the room beyond. The three women rose as she came in and she greeted them kindly but a trifle coldly, and this coldness immediately influenced Mrs. Finn to snifle loudly. Mrs. O'Brien said,—

"Sure, Miss Martha, darlint——"

Martha held up her hand and as they subsided into their chairs she took one near Mrs. Finn and said,—

"So, the 'woman's relief work' is a failure. I am sorry to hear it. I thought, with you three women, the most capable, the best informed of the doings of the quarter" (here one of Mrs. Mullaly's pink-rimmed eyes looked around the fold of dusty crepe she held against her face, with a quizzical expression that was almost Martha's undoing) "the most able to settle disputes,—things would go well. Why do they not?"

No one spoke for a moment. Then Mrs. O'Brien's



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rich brogue took up the tale, with an occasional assenting murmur from the other two.

After it was over, Martha said,—

“Now, ladies,”—here they individually and collectively breathed hard—“I shall ask you to do me the favor of making one further trial of it and I think if you will ask the Duchess for help when you find the work too much—for instance, let her relieve you of the book-keeping part of it, that is such a drudgery. I am certain that she would, for she never refuses anyone anything, does she?”

“No, the angel!” sighed Mrs. Finn.

—“Then the really difficult part of talking with the women, getting them to understand the value of the ‘fund’ and the relief pawn-shop, you three can do.”

A great sigh of relief went up.

“Sure, we be *that* stupid,” said Mrs. O’Brien, “that we never once thought of the little Duchess, and her a wonder at sums.”

The naïve admission was almost too much for Martha’s gravity, and when, after much interesting talk of “he said” and “she said” and “Father Tally, God love him,” etc., they left and Martha sank back on her chair, she thought with amusement of how really funny it had been, and wondered that people thought life dull and uninteresting.

Anna Dean had a guest to dinner that night and the doctor dropped in shortly before the hour, so they kept him, and Martha regaled them all with an account of the afternoon’s work.

As she told of Belle’s sweetness to Elsie and her further plans for helping her, the doctor’s eyes grew brighter and his big face was very pleasant to look upon, as he said,—

“I knew the young lady would find it a joy to help those who need help.”

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Mary turned away with a queer twist to her lips and Martha answered,—

“Yes, the dear child is full to bubbling over with helpfulness. I wish Uncle were not so set in his views.”

. . . . .

Several months slipped away.

Belle had kept up her visits to Elsie in her new home. The baby held out dimpled arms to her whenever she appeared. Elsie had gone back to her place at ———— & Co.'s, and little Nora Flinn came daily to help with the care of baby Blessing and aid Mrs. McDonald, who was suffering greatly from rheumatism.

Belle had grown into the habit of dropping into the settlement house often at tea time, with fruit and flowers, jellies and cordials, for Martha's sick folk, and as the days grew shorter it was quite dark when at five she would leave for home, and the big doctor felt it right to see that the dainty girl was safely out of the neighborhood and at her own door: so that they two had grown to feel very well acquainted. As he told her of his hopes and plans for the betterment of his people:—hopes of getting clean, sanitary homes, even though but a room a-piece; hopes of establishing reading and lecture rooms for his boys, places where there would be more attractions than they now found in the streets and saloons,—Belle watched his face glow with enthusiasm and ambition, and she marveled—and from marveling came to feel the great “call of the weighted brotherhood,” those who had, from birth, been kept down through inherited conditions of health, environment and their fellow men. As she and the doctor grew better and better friends, she gave expression to her interest and desire to be affiliated with the workers.

One stormy day, when the wind was blowing so hard that she had been obliged to cling close to the strong arm

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of the doctor and they had struggled along, deep in talk, about a block from her home a closed carriage passed them, the horses going slowly over the icy street, when, under the corner light the carriage stopped, the door opened quickly, and Mr. English got out, calling to Belle, who had not seen him.

"Belle, Belle!" The irate voice, so familiar, brought Belle to a stop and, turning, she saw her father, his always red face aflame with anger, his harsh voice thick.

"Get in there," he said, pointing to the carriage. "I've a word to say with this gentleman."

Belle stepped into the carriage and looked anxiously out.

The doctor had raised his hat and his strong face was set and cold, as he listened to the tirade that the older man poured forth.

Belle's straining ears could catch occasional words and phrases and the tears came to her eyes and a sob to her throat as she realized how ruthlessly her father was pulling down her slender dream house.

As the older man came to a pause for lack of breath, the doctor raised his hat again, saying,—

"Mr. English, you are mistaken on several points, but that does not matter: but you are right that I love your daughter, although I did not know it until now, myself. Just how that knowledge will affect her I truly do not know, but I shall ask her."

"You shall do nothing of the sort. She shall not ruin her life because in a moment of youthful enthusiasm she got mixed up with this settlement business. And you, sir, do you think you have a right to try to take a girl, brought up as mine has been, down to live in the slums?" And turning, he stepped into the carriage and closed the door.

They alighted at the house in silence and he helped her up the steps and into the vestibule, still silent. As they were removing their wraps in the hall, he said without looking at her,—



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"Come to my study, Belle, after you have dined. I shall not join you tonight. Robbins, bring me a tray to my study."

Their talk was a long one, and after it was over and Belle sat on a low chair next him, he said, with a long breath,—

"Well, thank God! I found out about this in time, for it would have about broken my heart to have had you marry him, and it would have made me wretched to forbid you to, if your heart had been set on it."

Belle had been crying, and now rather chokingly laughed as she answered,—

"Daddy dear, I guess I'm only a silly, frivolous thing, but I did get awfully interested in their work and I do like, oh, awfully like, the doctor, but I don't love him."

"That's all right, you can send 'em a fat check, and I'll give Martha a proper wiggling when I see her; but I suppose I'll have to eat humble pie to that young giant for my plain speech, and that's all right. As long as I don't lose you I don't care." His big, thick-fingered hand was very tender as he smoothed her bright hair.

"Oh, Dad! what a time I am going to have with you sometime when Mr. Right comes along."

"Not at all! not at all!" he spluttered. "When the right man comes, a man of your world"—

She pulled his face down and kissed him. "You're an old dear, but I have brought you up quite wrongly. Think of a properly behaved father doing what you did, and Robbins says you did not eat your dinner, either."

"Oh, bother Robbins!"

"Well, dear, to tell you the truth, I could not eat mine, either. There was an inconvenient lump in my throat. Let's have supper,—here before the fire"—and, springing up, she rang the bell. "Oh, Robbins, will you ask cook if she will send us up a nice little supper; say, a couple of birds and a celery root salad—and anything else she wants to." Robbins discreetly withdrew, trying hard not to smile at her roguish ex-

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pression, and Mr. English laboriously made up the fire with unnecessary fuel, whilst keeping his face turned to it. "And, oh, Robbins, you might bring a bottle of sparkling Moselle, too," Belle called after him.

They sat at the little table drawn up to the fire: Robbins converting the big library table into a buffet, served them, and the wind wailed and sobbed and shook the house with great blasts, but within the luxurious room, with its closely drawn curtains and glowing fire, there was a great calm, the calm that comes after an emotional storm.

The following day came a letter from the doctor, telling Belle of his love and asking her to marry him and, with him, work out the plans they had so often talked over.

Belle answered it frankly, honestly, as she did all things. After the doctor had read her letter he sighed deeply, then, putting the dainty, violet-tinted paper on the coals, watched it curl and crisp and, finally, caught up by a puff of wind, disappear in the chimney.

At the mission house about the same time Martha was reading aloud to Mary a note from Mr. English. When she finished, Mary said,—

"He's quite right. The child is no more fitted than a butterfly for the life of the woman who marries our doctor. She is a dear, loving, tender thing, but it needs so much more added to those attributes to keep such a man as he happy. Here is a check, Martha, for five thousand. Well," (with a rise of her heavy brows) "Mr. English evidently thinks it was a narrow squeeze. This will build the new addition, hurrah!"

Martha said no single word, but went quietly out of the room and, after she had closed the door, Mary murmured,—

"Poor dear!"

## An Experiment in Economics



E were as usual gathered about the tea table one afternoon in March, and Theo said, looking at the tea outfit,—

“Girls, do you realize that every article on that table is a treasure, from the collector’s point of view, and yet that in actual dollars they cost next to nothing?”

“Well, I like that,” said Dimples, “don’t you consider our time of value? And how many hours we have put in!—oh yes, blissfully, I’ll admit, but still taken from work, you know, hunting in musty old shops.”

“Oh, of course, it takes time, and, as you justly remark, time’s money; but I think that what I was trying to express was that if one has time, plus infinite patience and the true collector’s ‘*flaire*,’ one can gather together treasures without spending much in actual money.”

“Goodness, but I’ve proved that”— “And I,” said Dimples; “why when I decided to start life with a hundred dollars for my entire capital and a small trunk and a grip quite ample to contain the wardrobe I took with me, I learned among other things just what treasures one could find, given the requisite collector’s gifts.”

“Oh, Dimples, tell us—do”— “Yes, do” was echoed from all sides; “it’s only four-fifteen, and you’ve plenty of time for a good, long yarn.”

Dimples laughed at the outburst, and said,—

“I think I would better read you the diary I kept that first year of my independence. That will be better, so I’ll go and hunt if up whilst you clear away the things.”

Presently she came back, and, as the early twilight had settled down into a dark gray curtain and the winds were rampant, we drew the shades, lit the lamps and, busying



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ourselves with our various work, we prepared to listen to Dimples's story :

This diary I shall faithfully keep, posting from week to week, so that I may at the end of my experiment be able to follow clearly my life during this year, beginning November 1, 18—.

Arrived this morning at 10.30, Union Depot, possessed of luggage consisting of one steamer trunk, one large grip, umbrella, the clothes I wore and one hundred dollars in money ; perfect health, great amount of hope, and the faith that with these two last items I could make some kind of a life for myself, where I might find happiness, content and decent comfort.

My first thought was to find a clean, unfurnished room with the privilege of light housekeeping ; so I left my grip at the parcel room in the depot, and took a car down town, as I wished to go to a part of the city I had always thought most picturesque—that along the waterfront.

After looking at many rooms, all more or less dirty and unsanitary, I stopped at an Italian fruit stand and asked the kindly-faced, round, little woman within if she could tell me of any one who had a vacant room, preferably an attic one. I spoke to her in Italian, and she fairly beamed upon me as she replied,—

“That in the house above the shop her husband's mother lived on the top floor, and that she thought that she would rent me the back attic, if I would furnish it myself,” and she added, with that quick appreciation of the beauty-loving nation to which she belonged,—“that the two windows looked out upon the harbor and the sunsets were magnifica, seen from them.”

She and her family lived in the adjoining house.

I followed her directions, climbing the three flights of steep stairs, and finally arriving at the top landing, which, being lighted by a skylight, was cheerful and bright.

## AN EXPERIMENT IN ECONOMICS

I knocked at the door to the left, and in answer a fat, dark, jolly old woman appeared. After I had explained to her my errand, and that her daughter-in-law had sent me to her, she received me like a long lost sister and showed me into the empty room, which I found was a good-sized one and, as my little friend of the fruit shop had said, with "a view magnifica." Upon learning the price—five dollars a month—I took it, paying in advance, and then I sallied forth to get some necessary furniture for it.

Now, my idea has always been that there is generally a choice to be had; even when buying useful things they need not of necessity be ugly, and I intended to go very slow about my furnishings, only getting the barest necessities at first and gradually adding as I came across things that satisfied my taste.

To start with, the room was clean, had been just freshly whitewashed and the floor and woodwork scrubbed, so that was off my mind.

I took a car and went up town, where, at Macy's, I bought a box couch with good springs and covered in dark green denim; two pillows in similar covering; two pairs of art portieres in some one of the art linens in dark green, with a narrow Grecian border in shades of tan; one low basket chair and one-half dozen large towels of huckabuck; one half-dozen medium-sized bath towels; two warm travelling rugs and four pairs of sheets and cases; one half-dozen "near-linen" hemstitched doilies of different sizes. These I paid for and ordered sent to my room; then, on my way back, I bought, at a small shop near my new address, a little tête-à-tête set of blue and white porcelain, containing teapot, sugar basin, cream jug and two cups and saucers; added to these three blue and white plates and a nest of six blue and white bowls, the largest holding two quarts; bought a toaster, a broiler, a two-quart stew pan with cover and a tea-kettle in enamel ware.

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At a second-hand shop I bought a small stove of the kind whose front can be opened by sliding the doors, and an old brass-bound oak box, which I will convert into a coal box; brass tongs, shovel and poker, which were in good shape and workmanship and which a bottle of metal polish and some elbow grease would make things of beauty, and a mahogany-framed rocking chair.

I got two clean, empty boxes from a grocer where I bought my modest little list of necessities, and got a hammer and nails, tacks and four pieces of ten-inch board sawed into two-foot lengths, with the necessary pieces of wood for braces and uprights.

By evening everything was in place, and the little stove was doing its best to sound a note of coziness. The kettle was boiling cheerfully, and, after I had made myself a cup of tea and toasted myself two muffins, which I buttered well and lightly spread with chipped beef, I ate my supper in a state of beatitude, then cleared away and took account of stock.

My purchases had cost a total of \$36.95.

That left me for my entire capital \$63.05, not a very great amount to face the world with, and as I had burned to the last splinter my bridges there was no one to turn to for anything. But for the first time in years I had a feeling of self-respect, and my sense of joy in my freedom was so great that no shadow of fear or apprehension crossed it.

I looked over the contents of my trunk and made a little note of them. There were two suits—one of light-weight black, one of very dark blue cheviot; a heavy blue mohair; a black nun's veiling; two good, serviceable moreen underskirts in navy blue and black; six entirely new sets of linen mesh underwear; six pairs of new stockings; a couple of dozen new handkerchiefs; a warm eiderdown loose gown; two cotton crepe kimonos; six plain wash cheviot shirtwaists in blue and blue-and-white stripes; a half dozen plain linen turnover collars;



## AN EXPERIMENT IN ECONOMICS

several narrow ties; four night dresses; two pairs of corsets—all good, strong, plain; those, with two pairs of walking boots and a pair of slippers, filled the bottom of the trunk.

The tray contained a dozen volumes of my old favorites, my working outfit of paints, brushes, portfolio of designs and my writing pad.

My grip held a dark blue rain coat, rubbers, leggings, and a plain felt hat. These, besides the clothes I had on, constituted my entire outfit.

I won't have to get a rag for ages, except some stockings, possibly, so now for a long time to come shall only have to look out for rent and cost of living, which won't be much, thanks be!

My palate is a simple one, and the things I really like best are the things that cost least.

I made up my couch bed, took a sponge bath, and, opening the windows wide, went quite happily to bed with no pang of regret for the luxuries left behind in that past I had escaped from.

### A WEEK LATER. 9TH—

This has been a busy week. I have put up shelves for my books and housekeeping outfit. Hung the portieres, two at the windows, one over the nails holding my clothes, one over my homemade table. Painted my floor a dark brown. Bought a matting rug in tan and dark green. Made a screen to go before my bath outfit, which consists of a piece of hose pipe with a shower attached and a tin tub to stand in and catch the water, a pair of rubber curtains to keep the water from splashing, a board across two trestles to hold soap dish, toothbrush mug and brushes. Bought a small mirror which I hung over my shelf. Covered my screen, whose frame is a dollar clothes-horse painted green and covered with green denim. Bought two pots of bright red geranium

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for my windows. Hemmed a piece of dish-toweling and indulged in a blue and white enamel dishpan. Total expenditure, six dollars.

Have demonstrated that I can live on twenty-five cents a day and be full and nourished, and see my capital dwindled to 57.05 with the utmost equanimity.

On Monday, a week from to-morrow, I shall go to several of the addresses I have and try for some work. If I can get the plates to color at home I shall like that best, as I intend to try for as much freedom as I can get and am not ambitious of making more money than will keep me simply and give me something each month towards a nest egg for the proverbial rainy day. The dread of being ever dependent is my only dread.

A stray cat came crawling over the leads yesterday and has appropriated me, and although I have never cared much for cats this one was so determined to adopt me, and, after a tour of inspection, so evidently pleased with the place that I have let him stay. During the night he must have gone away as he came, for upon getting up this morning I found him gone, but about eleven o'clock, as I was fastening up some curtains over the clothes hooks, I felt something rub against my dress and saw his Majesty, arching his back and pressing against me. Gave him some milk, and shall make him a cushion so that if he elects to remain, or even come a-visiting, he can feel welcome. He has big yellow eyes and a fine coat of black fur.

My landlady is inclined to be very interested and neighborly. She spied my paints and brushes this morning and clapped her fat hands in delight to find that I was a dauber; but I found it difficult to make her understand my limitations. She immediately jumped to the conclusion that I had come into the quarter to get models, and when I finally got her to understand that I was only a colorist of other people's work, I could see that there was a struggle in her mind to keep me on the pedes-

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tal upon which she had placed me. But oh, how kind, how more than kind are these children of the Land of Sunshine! And when one has the passport of a knowledge of their tongue and the fellowship of poverty there is no limit to their friendliness.

My clothes are so severely plain and lacking in any color or adornment that amidst the gay colored silk waists and flower trimmed hats of the Sunday dress parade of the quarter I am an unobtrusive note struck in the gorgeous tone of color.

I saw more interesting sights in an hour's stroll with my landlady this afternoon than one would see in a month in other parts of the city, and I felt the limitation of my pencil. I saw a dozen things I wanted to sketch in as many minutes. How Phil would gloat over it all! It's a marvel to me how people can live all their lives in a city like New York and only know the few miles of conventional streets and houses, and with such chunks of the old world right around the corner, unnoticed, unknown, I suppose, the appreciation of it given up to a handful of artists.

This coming week I shall give up to prowling. I want to get a good geographical knowledge of this, my adopted quarter. I know it only slightly as yet and I want to locate little junk-shops, so that when time becomes precious and I am in harness I can get about with dispatch—during those precious hours I intend to steal from my dollar-getting to be joyous in.

I find that I must guard against forming friendships here and have it distinctly understood that I am a wage-earner, whose time is money, else all of these genial children of a larger growth will be settling on me like a swarm of locusts. I think I shall have to talk it out with my landlady, Mrs. Caprieno, and get her to be my angel with the flaming sword.

Just now there is a heavenly Indian summer glow over everything, and it is hard to believe that in a few weeks



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winter will be upon us. Before it comes I must have my little stove moved out into the room by the addition of a long piece of stove pipe, for the heating question will be of moment when winter is finally here, and if I am to do my work at home, as I hope to, that means continual fire; but the little stove is a wonder, gets red hot in ten minutes, and is so funny and important about it. I shall have to think up a series of dishes that cost little for materials, are most nourishing, and can stew away for hours, utilizing the heat during the long winter days. The only trouble is, all of those delectable dishes have onions and garlic galore in them, not to mention the succulent cabbage and turnips, and much as I love the dishes I do hate the smells.

Nov. 16,—.

This week has been delightful. I have made acquaintance with every picturesque character within a radius of a square mile, and oh, my mouth waters when I think of the little shops I have discovered! Why, some of it looks like virgin ground to me, and yet surely it could not be, with collectors using the "fine-tooth-comb method" all over the city. Why, I've seen heaps of coppers and brasses that came straight from their birthplaces in the old countries, and will go straight into my den when I have earned the right to them.

Tomorrow I take up the yoke. Had rather thought of giving myself another week, but my capital has dwindled to fifty-three dollars, owing to some further purchases, and I think I will open an account with fifty tomorrow at the —— Savings Union, and dawdle no longer.

Had my stove, which I have christened "Martha," moved out three feet and a zinc put under it; that leaves room behind it for the coal box, whose brass corners and hinges and nails have been polished. It holds the supply for a week. Mrs. Caprieno has allowed me to use half of her outside coal bin for my reserve stock, which

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will last three weeks, and as the weather has in a few days grown very cold and I have had to keep Martha busy all day, I know to a coal how much it will take to keep me comfortable.

I have made an admirable chiffonier from a drygoods box, putting three shelves in it and covering it with green linen. I had a hole made in the small tin tub under my shower and had it connected with the drain pipe, so that the water can run off at its own sweet will.

I have decided to institute a "pot au feu," which will utilize the heat and always give me soup. The top of Martha just holds it and the tea kettle at the same time and I can broil or toast through the sliding doors over a bed of red hot coals when I want to be particularly festive. Out on the landing there is a sink and there I can peel my vegetables, and anything I cannot burn in the way of refuse (there's mighty little, I find—principally tea leaves and coffee grounds), I take down to the ash-barrel in the alley.

All of these people have learned the A B C of economy, and it is surprising to see how small is the waste; in fact there is no waste, strictly speaking.

They are not at all a spendthrift race, as is generally supposed; on the contrary, everything is made to count and everyone of them is the possessor of a small bank account and is thrifty and self-respecting.

Poverty is not at all dreadful under the methods prevalent here, and is only poverty "comparative," quite unlike that of the districts infested by the Poles and Russians around the corner. And what adorable cheerfulness and merriment they possess! In this house of four stories are living six families, all Italians, with an average of four children to the family, and yet I have not seen anything but kindness and courtesy or heard anything but cheerful laughter and gossip. Even the babies—perfect little darlings most of them—are friendly with me and hold out grubby, fat little hands in greeting.

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In the next house live the Torrelli's, the fruit stall people whose mother is Mrs. Caprieno, and their house is equally crowded. Occupying the attic room corresponding to mine is a little woman, a hunchback, who has the most beautiful eyes I have ever seen. We are on greeting terms, having met at the stall making our purchases. Little Mrs. Torrelli tells me that she works in an artificial flower making establishment and has lived in their house for five years; that she plays the violin and often is engaged to play for the people in the quarter at weddings and festive gatherings; that no one knows anything about her beyond her name, her occupation and her musical gift, but everyone likes and respects her. Her nationality is unknown, she speaks Italian well, likewise French, but it is generally believed that she is a Russian. Am greatly attracted to her. I wonder if she will let me be friendly. I will try it anyway, I can't get more than a rebuff. Those beautiful soft eyes haunt me. A something of wistfulness in them makes me feel that I will succeed.

This is the commencement of my third week in my new home and I begin to feel that it is truly "home": my row of books on their shelf, the various articles placed to the best advantage, little Martha glowing, the tea kettle singing and "his Majesty," who by now has quite settled it in his mind that this is his domicile, lying on the cushion I have made him, my lamp burning clearly upon the table on which my writing and painting things are spread, all give me the feeling that it is home.

Nov. 23,—

Monday dawned, if a weak and yellowish, watery gray could be called dawn, and by ten had definitely decided to do its worst for awhile. Watching the downpour, I debated the advisability of staying warmly and comfortably at home, but the realization that I had entered the ranks of the workers and could not afford to be kept at



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home by a bit of weather, likewise that only three dollars and two cents stood between me and no "pot au feu,"—as I had determined that I would not draw a cent of that poor little fifty dollars—decided me. I put on a short skirt, my rain coat and rubbers, opened my umbrella and made a dash for a car. Had two blocks to walk after I got off the car, and arrived at my destination—the Publishing House of S—— and Sons, looking, I suppose, very rakish indeed, for the wind had risen to a gale and buffeted and shaken me so that I felt grateful to arrive entire, if a trifle wild in appearance. My umbrella had, with "the pure cussedness of inanimate things" at inopportune moments, simply turned up its ribs and given up the ghost, but the struggle with the elements had awakened the fighting spirit in me and I felt equal to interviewing a whole regiment of publishers or their henchmen.

A meek, bespectacled, small, blond man came to my rescue as I was wandering about looking for anything in the way of a sign that would lead me to the presence of one of the elect. (For I had decided that I would have speech with a superior if possible, though he be ever so awe-inspiring. When I had stated my errand, he very civilly showed me into the office of Mr. Warren, who turned out afterward to be in control of the particular department I was determined to join and whom likewise, on further acquaintance, I found to be a very benevolent and kindly man, whose hoarse huskiness of voice and fierce, bewhiskered countenance absolutely belied him.

Being as businesslike as possible, I stated my desire to be enrolled upon the books of S—— and Sons as colorer of plates. Showed the half dozen I had brought with me as examples of my work, and stated that I was also equal to executing fine work in capital illuminating.

Mr. Warren looked at the work carefully and then, excusing himself, went into an inner room and was gone some time.

I amused myself in looking over a quantity of colored

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plates, mounted and otherwise, mostly wretched work, and read over a prospectus for a new subscription of —'s works, which they were to be used for.

I was still looking with a feeling of amusement, tempered by astonishment at the taste of a public that would submit to having its mental pabulum given it illustrated so fearfully and wonderfully, when Mr. Warren came back into the room bringing another man, who said, without waiting for anything in the way of an introduction and in the hurried manner of a man who has not a moment to spare,—

“Very good work. How many plates, six by four and a half, can you do in a day?”

I gasped a little, then, copying his tense tone and manner, said,—

“Depends entirely upon the finish of the plates,—some paper works more quickly than other,—and upon the quality of the work. This kind of work,” pointing to the mounted plates, “I could not do at all, not if any amount of time was given me. It takes a quality of talent I do not possess.”

He looked at me in an amazed way for a moment, then I saw the ghost of a smile twitch the corner of his lips under the ragged mustaches, and his words were a trifle less hurried, as he answered,—

“Well, no. Not like those, but like these,” pointing to my own plates.

I made a rapid calculation and decided that I could do twelve.

“I think that if you will allow me to take the work home, where I can be free from all interruptions, I can do seventy in a week. Not exactly as detailed work as those, but to the person other than a professional, equally good. The quality of that work is suitable only for de luxe editions, and is worth at least ten times more. Would you mind giving me the work to do in my studio?”

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I nearly came to grief over that word, for a vision of the room during some of its times of stress, such as ragout day and wash day, was very clear, but I thought I kept all signs of laughter out of my voice and eyes.

He looked at me for a moment, during which my heart did unpleasant things, and then said,—

“No, that would be satisfactory.”

And then we got down to dollars. We finally agreed upon a basis that will give me about fifty dollars a month if I work five hours daily. Of course, if I get mercenary and fall into the money-getting fever I can double or treble it, but what I want to do is to earn enough to live simply on without giving all of my precious time to grubbing.

I left my address, which I think seemed an odd one to them both, for again I caught the tip end of that smile,—and I brought back my first week's allowance of plates.

It had stopped raining when I left the building, but the clouds looked threatening and heavy, so I decided to walk along the line of the cars that I might get on board one if it suddenly began to pour. I hung my portfolio under the cape of my rain coat by the straps and walked briskly along. I do love to be out on a rainy day if I am in proper rig for it. I had nearly reached home when it came down in torrents, and as my umbrella was useless, I pulled the cowl of my coat over my hat and ran for it. Stopped in to buy some bananas at the Torrelli's and told my good news.

I showed my colored plates to little Mrs. T—— and she called to Mr. T——. They were as interested and delighted as could be and made me feel quite as though I were in the bosom of a large and appreciative family, which is delightful and has none of the disadvantages of reality.

The light in my “studio” is perfect and good even on a dark day, but the days are so short that I shall not indulge in any prowls until late afternoons, say from



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four until six or half-past, then all of the hours of good light I can give up to work and with a most clear conscience spend the rest doing my own sweet will.

Nov. 30,—

Thanksgiving Day was the stormiest one I remember ever to have seen. As I had laid in my "turkey" (which was a fat chicken which I pot-roasted, and a most delectable dish it was when it came to the festive board) and having nothing to take me abroad I settled to a nice cosy day with Martha doing her noblest.

His Majesty, adorned with a large tartan bow in honor of the occasion; an all pervading steaminess of preparing dinner—when I suddenly thought of my little neighbor of the next house, wondered if she was alone and lonely, opened my window and leaned far out and tapped on the glass of her window with my umbrella handle.

Presently the window was opened and my neighbor looked out. I said,—

"Oh, Miss Vostand, I'm just woefully lonely, won't you take pity on me and come over and be neighborly?"

She flushed up and then said in her nice little way,—

"Oh, I should so love to, but I have a wreath to finish today and I can't." Then she added, shyly,—“Won't you come up to me, I should be so glad to have you.”

My vision of a nice comfy "slipper and kimono" day fled, but there was something so wistful in those lovely eyes that I said yes. And twenty minutes later arrived at the top of the third flight next door breathless and laden, for I had decided to take my dinner with me, and some work.

She opened the door and welcomed me laughingly as I explained my laden condition.

It was a cozy little room with an open grate fire, simple as mine in its furnishings and not unlike, except that she had many more books and her walls were less bare.

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Her table was covered with a litter of bright rose leaves and the various tools of her trade. I caught a glimpse of a violin-case on a stand, and piles of music.

After I had deposited my various packages—the tightly covered chicken-pot on the side-iron in the grate to keep warm, the mince pie on top of it,—I put my box of paints on the end of her work table and my portfolio near by, sank down on the chair she gave me, caught my breath, and shortly we were talking away as though we had always known each other.

Her name is Nora Vostand—her mother was Irish, her father Russian, and she is American by birth, but has lived many years abroad. She did not go into the family history but I rather fancy it is interesting.

She makes artificial flowers, roses so perfect one would swear they were real, and says that she loves her trade. I saw also some water-color sketches she had done of flowers, and they were marvelous. She modestly admitted that she was supposed to be the best rose maker in New York, when I exclaimed over their perfection. I told her of my experience since coming here and of my trade, and as we laughed and compared notes, chatted of our work and tastes, we found that we had many things in common.

We had both seen much of the old world and both intended to go back some day.

“But,” as she said,—“if it is necessary to earn money America is the place to do it in; and it is necessary for me to do so,” she added.

“And for me” I supplemented, “it’s earn or starve. I’ve not a cent in the world but fifty lone dollars, but I can earn what I need and not give up all of my precious time to it either, I have discovered.”

She sighed.

“Oh, how lucky, that’s the only thing I really long for, more leisure; but I must always make a certain sum monthly and to do it, it means eight to ten hours a day,

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although I get very well paid," she said, "but I have others dependent upon me."

My contribution to the festivities had been the chicken pot-roast and a mince pie. She had macaroni, Neapolitan, and with those and bread and butter we dined sumptuously and merrily.

I found her delightful as I had expected, and after we had finished dinner she played to me, oh such music! and I straightway went to paradise and stayed there dreaming dreams and seeing visions. Music always has that effect on me and I am a little afraid of it for that reason.

Finally the twilight fell and we sat before the fire and 'reminisced.'

At five we made tea and then she lighted the lamp (one of those water globe lamps that are so much used in the old countries like the one Balzac describes in *Une Double Famille*) and she worked on the delayed wreath whilst I read aloud. We were in a Dickens mood and I read pet bits from half-a-dozen books.

Finally at nine o'clock I packed my traps and after a hearty good night I groped my way down-stairs, out for a shivering instant into the street, to my own door and up my own stairs.

Martha had felt the lack of attention and subsided into the black sulks, so I made a hasty toilet and got into bed as quickly as possible and his Majesty came and crawled up on the foot of the bed.

The storm raged for three days and I worked hard, only going out for a brisk walk at five each day, and then only on our own block, for it is quite dark by that time now, and whilst I have no fear, still I am not yet quite acclimated to my new quarters and near us is a district given up to a very rough element. So I walk furiously up and down for an hour and then come in feeling fresh and stimulated by the sharp air and exercise, and light my lamp, shake up Martha to the full realization of



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her duty and get myself my supper at about six-thirty; then settle to a nice long evening of reading.

Up to Saturday had not seen my little neighbor, except as we leaned from our respective windows for a word of greeting.

Took back my first batch of plates, got a new supply and received my first payment, twelve-eighly.

Stopped and bought two books I had had my eye on for a week at the bit of an old book shop on — St. One was a *Robinson Crusoe* in French, an odd volume of a set of "Voyage Imaginaire," fine old calf binding, good tooling, big print, four copper etchings by —, the date of publication 1787. The other, an odd volume of Le Sage, *Le Diable Boiteaux*, very similar in bindings and plates, both in excellent condition. Paid fifty cents for the two. Being odd volumes, the shopman had put them in the twenty-five cent box, which showed his ignorance, but I could have jumped for joy, I was so delighted. Please the fates, I shall have many of my old favorites about me again. Yes, decidedly it was harder to give up my dearly beloved books than everything else put together.

When I went to the office of S—— and Sons yesterday, it being a radiant cold clear day, I put on my best suit, hat, gloves, and shoes and walked. Already the Christmas feel is in the air and the streets and shops are very much alive. I had great fun, as usual, watching the crowds, and committed a fierce extravagance, bought a bunch of violets. Only a tiny bunch to be sure, for I paid but fifty cents for them and I shall discipline myself for two days now and allow myself no butter. Violets in December! And in New York! Just wanton luxury.

After I had been to the office I wandered up Broadway and in watching one pretty victoria, with its sable-furred occupant, I smiled to think how short a time ago I, too, was riding behind just such a pair of fine bay horses,

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bored, unhappy, and my smile must have looked recognition, for the eyes of the occupant of the victoria met mine in a puzzled stare.

After I had walked up as far as Thirty-second St., I turned east and at Fourth Avenue took a down-town car home. Before going up to my room, I went up to Miss Vostand's and finding her at home begged a cup of tea. She dropped her work and we talked and chatted.

We decided to have a board put up long enough to go from her window to mine, so that we could be really neighborly and "swap pie" occasionally, and we exchanged recipes for good substantial dishes, whose value was in their minimum cost and maximum goodness and nourishment. I told her that I had found it possible to live wholesomely and have the dishes I liked best on two dollars a week.

She said that she could not quite do that, it cost her about three dollars, so I promised to write out a list of dishes for her. She has not the gift of getting the value out of a dollar that I have and I strongly suspect does not have the right kind of food most times; lives altogether too much on tea-crackers-and-jam diet, which is all wrong.

Last night as I sat reading, waiting for Martha to cool down a trifle before bedtime, Madame Caprieno came to my door and said that the Torrelli baby was dying, and the poor old thing was wringing her hands and wailing in a heart-broken way. I caught up my cloak and rushed down-stairs and into the next house, where, in the kitchen, I found what looked like the entire Italian colony gathered. The baby, a darling about a year old, was apparently strangling and as I heard the hoarse sound, I recognized the presence of the dread croup.

I asked for the doctor, and was told that he had been sent for but had not come; so I took the matter into my own hands, sent the husband to the chemist's at the cor-

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ner for caustic, ordered hot water, flannels, and all of the people out of the room, for the air was completely exhausted of oxygen. Opened a window and placed a covered chair-back as a screen. Finally when I thought the time had come to use the acid, I did, and the poor, blessed baby was relieved.

An hour after, when the fuss was all over and the baby sleeping in a warm nest of flannels, the air in the room pure, every one out of it but the poor, prostrate little mother and the father and myself, the doctor came. I told him what I had done and he gave a long, low whistle, then said,—

“Well, it has saved the baby, but how came you to dare to do it?”

I only looked at him with full eyes. I could not tell him that I had lost my own baby, long ago, because I had *not* dared to do it then; but he evidently guessed something of the sort and said nothing further.

He is rather a remarkable chap for a settlement man, big and brawny with a strong, kind face, gentle, deep voice and the air of a gentleman. My landlady tells me he is a great favorite and has immense influence over the — Ward lot, probably the worst ward in all of New York.

He hustled us all off to bed, saying that he would sit with the baby's mother for another hour, but that the danger was over for this attack. So the halls cleared and people went to their several rooms, the dear, kind things that they are! Every mother, father, sister and brother and their relatives a dozen times removed, were as anxious as though the baby was a personal possession.

I found Nora Vostand sitting shivering on the top step of the lower flight and took her home. Made a pot of coffee, toasted some bread and we had a midnight spread, for just as we were sitting down to it the bells rang.

Martha had kept up her neat little fire whilst I was



gone and the room was warm and cosy. It was the first time that Nora Vostand had been in it and she looked over it approvingly and said,—

“Our rooms are very similar, are they not, even to the disposition of the furniture?”

I showed her my book finds which she thought lovely, and we agreed that much could be done in the collecting line, given the real spirit, a mite of money, and time to prowl. We promised ourselves an afternoon off some time to go “copper” hunting together.

At one o'clock we said good-bye and bemoaned the fact that there was no door between our houses on the top floor to save all those long stairs.

I went to see the baby to-day and the way I was welcomed by the family made me feel very chokey. We all had a nice comfortable weep together, then cheered up. The blessed kiddy was quite herself, only a trifle weak, and smiled and made big eyes at me. What ravishingly lovely babies these people have. They may grow into very ordinary looking boys and girls, but as babies they are certainly perfect cherubs.

Decided I would write to Phil. She will keep mum about me and I want her to know that I am all right in all ways and happier than I have been in years; and after awhile I will write to Kathie, but not just yet. I saw the notice of her baby's birth and I can imagine the jubilation at Farringdon Hall, over this tiny heir to the millions.

On Saturday, a perfect day, I allowed myself the afternoon. After taking my finished work to the office I just “played hookey.” Went to Brentano's and looked at all of the new holiday editions. Stopped in at Goupil's and reveled in etchings, engravings and aquarelles to my heart's content, salving my conscience for not buying by telling the clerks that I was “only looking, had not yet decided.” Went to see an exhibition of water colors. Finally, at four-thirty, after having walked

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miles it seemed, seen all sorts of things of interest and beauty, of luxury and uselessness, (although to me anything that pleases the eye is useful) I turned contentedly homeward. And when I got to my door, with my arms filled with packages,—for I had stopped to do my Sunday marketing,—I found my door knob adorned with four big bananas, two huge California oranges and a string of the tiny, fat little nut sausages the Italians love, all hanging by strings. As I took them off, I found underneath them all, a tiny silk scapula, with an embroidered silk picture of the Blessed Virgin and Child. From the corner of my eye, I could see that my landlady's door was opened the width of an eye and I heard asthmatic breathing, so I knew whence had come my treasures. I exclaimed (in Italian) my surprise and pleasure and heard a delighted fat chuckle as I closed my own door.

I put the fruit on my one Dresden plate, a recent find. My sausages went into a saucepan to cook for my supper, and I hung the lovely bit of needlework over my worktable where my eyes could feast on it.

As I had missed my tea I treated myself to a tea-supper, toasted muffins and tea, sausages, and a salad. Later, when I went out on the landing to get some coal, I gave my jolly landlady, who was hovering there, a good hug, which pleased her mightily. Before going to bed I knocked on my neighbor's window and asked her to have dinner with me the next day.

DEC. 14,—

This week has been a delightful one. First in importance, I have met a woman I want to know better. She is a friend of Nora's and a worker in the settlement.

Then I had a long talk with the baby's doctor, who, it seems, is also a friend of Nora's.

I am working on the plates for a limited edition de

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grand luxe, which will pay me very well. Had a long talk with Mr. W., and found him very interesting. Very different in reality from what I had judged him that first time I met him.

Have had Nora once to dinner and been to tea with her twice, and discovered that if I do not look out I shall get to love her; and I swear that I will not love anyone again. I am going in for the "Universal Brotherhood" proposition. No chance of getting one's illusions shattered, cause why? One has none to shatter; and no chance to be given heartaches, because, so far as I can make out, one's heart seems to sort of shrivel up and atrophy, at least that is the way the Universal folk always strike me. They seem to run more to liver than to heart and it goes to their complexions. All I have ever seen look sort of muddy and in need of face steaming, but they certainly wear complacency as a garment, and I suppose a little matter of complexion is not too much to pay for feeling one's self superior.

On Saturday, I am to "tea" the doctor, Nora, and her friend, Miss Farrish, and shall do my cleaning on Friday, that my small castle may be shining.

DEC. 22,—

This week has been stormy again; almost a blizzard it amounted to on Thursday and Friday and I feared it would continue, there seemed no let up on Friday night, as I looked out before going to bed.

All the week I had worked like a "nailer," (don't know just what a "nailer" is, but it sounds emphatic) and I finished my weekly number of plates and subsidized the small son of my second floor neighbor to take them to the office for me. Then had alternate chills and fever as my active imagination painted harrowing pictures of their being lost, although I had pinned them inside his coat with three large safety pins; of their getting



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wet and spoiled, although I had wrapped them well in a silk handkerchief and some waxed paper; had visions of losing my job, delaying the edition, all kinds of horrors, until he returned two hours after I had started him, with a fresh batch of plates done up in the same way and a little scrawl from Mr. W., enclosing the money and his expression of satisfaction with the plates.

In my delight at finding my fears groundless, I added twenty-five cents and a worsted scarf to the original stipulated sum, plus several compliments on his trustworthiness, although I had grave doubts of the truthfulness of his story of going and returning without having stopped; but, anyway, the errand had been done and if he did not altogether deserve the compliment he probably will try to some other time. I know undeserved praise always did affect me that way when I was a child.

When my company came, all three together at four-thirty on Saturday, I was ready for them.

I had everything polished that could be polished and Martha was doing her noblest; the muffins had toasted to perfection and were getting nice and "butter steamy" under their cover. I had borrowed two cups and saucers through the window from Nora; the geraniums in the windows were blooming; my work-table was converted into an afternoon tea-table and spread with a white hemstitched cloth, the blue and white tea service, and a dish of fruit; and in a little vase was one perfect Marechal Niel rose, which I had bought a tight little bud but three days before, and had watered and warmed and loved into bursting into a great creamy fragrant flower.

Oh, what a wonderful thing is affinity! every friend I have ever had has been recognized from the first meeting, and after my guests had left Saturday I sat thinking happily that I had again met "my own." There was to be no loneliness for me, on the contrary a fulness of life and interest.

Our talk had touched on many things; books, the col-

lector's instinct, music, travel, and finally had settled down to a telling of anecdote and story, all taken from their life and work in the settlement: fun and pathos, with bits of pretty stirring melodrama at times.

Now here were "workers in the vineyard," that I could admire; strong, active, normal, kind, with no air of feeling themselves set aside, but filled with genuine humanity, which took the form of service to others, but took it cheerfully, matter-of-factly and helpfully. Each with a history I was longing to know, but with no sentimental whining over broken hearts or endeavor to ease them by an easy philanthropy. Good red blood flowed in their veins and I felt certain that they were still trying to down the old Adam.

Oh, I was glad to find these new friends and to feel that they had made me one of them, and I fairly hugged myself in my joy.

The coming Thursday will be Christmas and Miss Farish has invited me to come to the settlement festivities and enjoy and help.

DEC. 28TH,—

A glorious week. Weather clear, cold, and snappy. On Thursday I dressed myself in my best, took a big apron along to protect my gorgeousness, carefully covered up Martha's red eye with some ashes so I might find some warmth on my return, and, leaving his Majesty greatly offended on the landing with his cushion and some lunch, started at eleven-thirty for the settlement house.

Early as I thought I was, I found a long line of children ahead of me waiting for the doors to be opened at one!—an hour and a half off!

I scurried around to the side door on the Alley that Nora had told me of, and gaining admittance was shown up to the big room where long tables had been set.

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Here I found the doctor on a pair of steps, tacking up some perverse greenery, and Miss Farrish, with her mouth full of tacks, standing on a kitchen chair valiantly hammering (with the heel of her slipper) the support for a banner of evergreens, with "Merry Christmas" marked in letters of red berries.

Another woman, who was crawling out from under the table when I appeared on the scene, introduced herself as Anna Dean and explained her humble attitude by the information that the trestles were shaky that the table boards were spread on, and she feared impatient small feet might bring them down, if not further strengthened.

Presently I was as busy as the others and finally at twenty minutes to one, the doctor, looking out of the window, said,—

"I fancy we had best let them in, poor mites! Did you ever see so many little blue noses and purple little fists, and what a mob!"

"Mob! I should think so" wailed Miss Farrish—"why there must be two hundred and we have only enough for a hundred. Oh, I just can't tell them. You go, Doctor, they will be so disappointed."

The doctor looked as though he did not relish the job, but presently we heard the sound of an army of small feet and the big doors were thrown open. Such eager, small, pinched faces there were! An evident effort had been made to tidy up and adorn and the results were strange and wonderful to view. I did not know for a minute whether I was going to laugh or cry. Then Martha Farrish in her kind voice and clever way welcomed them and marshaled them into seats, where they were first given a bowl each of hot soup, then turkey and dressing, baked sweet potatoes and puddings. The plates were cleared with such dispatch that I felt like rubbing my eyes. It was as though marvelous feats of legerdemain were being performed and I thought,—“Oh, shades of Horace Fletcher! what will happen to these children,



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will they spontaneously combust, or have acute indigestion, or what!" But nothing happened and after every one had been helped at least three times a diversion was created by the opening of the doors into the next room, with an invitation to enter which created a stampede, for in full view was a Christmas tree, a huge tree aglow with candles, sparkling with gay tinsel trimmings, with a waxen, chubby cherub atop, whose outspread wings softly swept the tiptop branches. Under the tree was a long sleigh piled with packages, and a rotund, bearded and jolly Santa Claus stood leaning against it.

It was a study to watch the children. The varying expressions of hope, fear, joy that the pinched small faces showed, as dollies and tops, warm hoods, mittens, socks, were distributed. There were long net stockings bound in crimson tape and filled with candy, nuts, oranges, and a long pink and white peppermint cane, tied with a great bunch of tissue paper ribbon.

After the last presents had been distributed, the last little fist filled, Santa Claus gave them a talk, telling of the child born so long ago, in whose name this and other such feasts were given. Told in Italian, then in German and finally in English, for these children were a polyglot lot and gathered from the slums of the various nationalities.

Then Santa Claus disappeared, to return a few moments later as the friend of most of them, their own doctor.

There were games and songs and dancing, for these children of the slums dance from babyhood, and it was a pretty and pathetic sight to see these little ones holding tightly to their presents and dancing lightly to the music of the piano, played by Miss Dean.

At six o'clock they were each given a hot, well sweetened glass of weak coffee and a currant bun, and sent home, and we sank into chairs, tired to our very marrows, but I, for one, had enjoyed every minute of it. It

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was the first time in my life that I had seen a hundred waifs and strays gathered together at one time and I mentally decided that it would not be my last. What! miss the joy of seeing these little wan faces lighten up and flush! The sight of that amazed joy as the presents were put into the grimy little paws! Well, no.

Miss Farrish has promised to take me with her some day when she makes her "comfort" visits, as she calls them, and I am most curious to see someone whom she and the doctor call the "Duchess" and who lives in a house in Cat Alley. They both were constantly referring to her in their chat of the other afternoon in my den. And there's another person whom they call "Muriel Anastasia," who seems to be very much of a character and when I wanted to know more, they both laughed and said,—

"Wait and see."

When I returned on Christmas night with Nora she begged me to go up to her den for a cup of tea and a snack, for we had been so busy at the mission house we had not eaten any dinner. As it was eight and I suddenly felt famished I went up, and there was the duckiest little spread, all ready. Nora had arranged with the Torrelli's, who were fairly bursting to be of use to me, to have everything cooked and ready by eight.

There was turkey breast and mushrooms on a bed of saffron colored macaroni and minced chestnuts, a Neapolitan dish I adore, a salad, and two fat baked sweet potatoes; and for dessert we had the famous nut pudding with a sprig of holly stuck in it, and a dish of fruit.

Nora said that she had not been able to make them take any money for the things or their trouble, for seeing that they would be hurt if she insisted, she had let them have their way. So we ate and talked and had a most jolly time, and when, at ten, I got back to my own quarters, I felt that I had had the most interesting and altogether delightful Christmas in years.

The plates are going beautifully for they are on Japanese parchment, and I find it difficult to remember that they are "trade plates." My inclination is to put too fine and too much work on them. Some day I shall hope for the sort of work I love best, but of course it will have to be for some lucky individual, who is "extra illustrating" some pet book or books and is able and willing to pay the price.

JAN. 4,—

New Year's has come and gone.

There was a wedding in the next house and I was invited and went, and such fun as it was! Nora played for the dancing and I footed it with the rest and danced until I was a rag. The supper was a wonder! and I got away only at two-thirty, having danced my slippers to tatters, drunk quarts of red wine, eaten of many strange dishes and had more real fun and enjoyment than I ever had at other and more correct functions in my life at home.

The next morning I felt feverish from the effects of my indiscretion in eating and drinking the night before and told his Majesty he was a nuisance, when I had to open the door for him twice, and did not blacken Martha; and both he and Martha sulked. Yes, decidedly the wind was east, and I felt I would better go out and walk myself into a decent mood, which I did, coming home very tired and penitent to my good friends, who instantly responded to my changed mood.

On Wednesday, as I was taking my constitutional, I ran across Mr. W. and I suppose my amazement must have been very apparent, for he somewhat incoherently explained that business had called him into the neighborhood. We talked for a moment, then I excused myself, saying that I had only done twenty minutes of my hour's exercise and must not linger or keep him. Now,



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I wonder what business could bring him away down here? Funny! Decidedly funny! He does not exactly give one the idea of a man who would find this sort of thing interesting, yet one can never tell. I do not appear the kind of woman who would, yet I have found and am still finding, pictures at every turn.

JAN. 14,—

It seems much more than a week since I last wrote, for all sorts of interesting things have happened.

First on the list was an afternoon spent with Miss Farrish on one of her "comfort" visits, and I returned feeling that personally I was a most fortunate individual, for what are a few lost illusions or a broken heart (which, parenthetically, mine I find, is *not*—only cracked, and cemented so neatly with new interests that it seems as strong as ever). Of what moment are these whilst there's perfect health, work that is to my liking and that gives me a living, and the great, busy, interesting world to watch and be amused at.

Our first visit was to a tenement, where in the course of a half-hour, I saw more downright misery of the sordid, awful kind than I thought could exist in a whole city, heroism of no mean order, and such patience under fortune's heaviest blows that I felt too sad even for tears; but amidst the horrors there were several bits of real brightness: one, and the brightest, our visit to the "Duchess" a tiny, charming old woman with the manners of a "grande dame" of the old school. Her room at the tip top of the house was the cleanest and daintiest place! I fairly gasped when I saw it and her, and she gave us tea and made us welcome. Oh, I would love to know all about her, for there is something great to know, I feel certain.

The big doctor came in whilst we were there and Miss Farrish and he and the Duchess held a great pow-wow

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over ways and means. I never saw three people so given over to anything as they are to active charity work. Oh, I'm learning a lot about the "submerged" and I wonder how the rich people can bear to *be* rich, when there is all of this horror at their very doors.

After we had drunk our tea and bade good-bye to the Duchess we went across the Alley to another house and up four flights of rickety stairs to call upon Muriel Anastasia.

In one back room at the end of the hall, lives Mrs. McGillings who goes out "charring" by the day, is a widow and the possessor of six small children, of whom Muriel Anastasia is the eldest, aged twelve; the others stair-step at intervals of a year or two. The mother was out working, but was expected home at six. In the meantime M. A. did the honors.

The room contained a large bed, with a truckle bed underneath, a table, two chairs, a chest of drawers, a small stove, a few cooking utensils, and everything as clean as soap and water and a liberal supply of elbow grease could make it. Even the children shone from a recent application of brown soap, and M. A. herself was tidiness personified.

At first I could not make out just what it was that struck me as being wrong with her. When she was seated she looked tall, when standing, small. Then I discovered that the body was very long and the legs very, oh *very* short; a peculiar deformity that taken with her queer, sharp, little old face, her tightly braided hair, done up in a tiny knot, and her air of gentle authority and perfect composure, was tremendously funny.

She had marshalled the five children into a corner, so that Miss Farrish and I could enter the small room, had dusted off the speckless chairs with the end of a long checked bib-apron in a second, and stood smiling mildly upon us.

Miss Farrish told her that I was a friend of hers and

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M. A. acknowledged the introduction with a quick curtsey and "I'm sure you are most welcome, mem."

Then she and Miss Farrish talked of how well the McGillings' fortunes were doing, how her mother was feeling fine and had an office building to do now, that paid her a dollar a day, and how much more easy than house-to-house "charring" it was, besides being "regular pay." How Jamie commenced on Monday next to run errands at a big wholesale place at a dollar and a half a week, and here she drew Jamie from the bunch in the corner, very red and perspiring freely in his bashfulness, and ordered him to make his bow and thank Miss Farrish for the fine new mittens and muffler. He obeyed by a duck of the head and a muttered something.

Then Alantha May, aged eight, was brought forth to give thanks for a little work-box and to show her last bit of needle-work, which, by the way, was very remarkable work for a child. I exclaimed at it and Miss Farrish said that Alantha May was a pupil of the mission house and, if she kept on as she had begun, would be a first class sempstress; upon which the little girl seemed as much pleased as though the gates into paradise had been opened to her.

Tommie, aged six, was still too young to feel shy and obediently made his little bow and gave his thanks for the new cap and mittens and volunteered the information that "Jacky Dill" next door had got a ball and bat and he wished Santa Claus had given him one, at which I made a mental note that "ball and bat" one shade better than Jacky's he should have.

Two little girls of four and two, dear chubby things, then made their little bows and as they both had dollies tightly hugged to them and were evidently quite content with them, Tommie stood forth as the only malcontent in the lot, and was suffering agonies of repentance over his outbreak under the sternly reproachful gaze of Muriel Anastasia.



She, herself, had been sent a ten-yard piece of brown and white gingham, a crimson worsted fascinator, which she evidently looked upon with awe, and a good sized work-box, well fitted up, and she beamed with true housewifely pride as she showed us the contents.

When we left I told her that I had had a very nice visit and should hope to come again if she would invite me, which she did very prettily.

We left half-a-dozen oranges and a package of tea, coffee and four cans of condensed milk for the mother.

Then I brought Miss Farrish home with me for a studio supper, at which Nora joined us, and I heard all about the McGillings. The father and mother had come over to New York from London, four years before, hoping to better their condition, and things had gone well for two years or more, until after the birth of the last baby. Then one day the father was badly hurt at the docks where he was at work loading a vessel, and died in the hospital a few weeks after.

They had only a bit of money left after his funeral and the decent home of three rooms had to be given up and cheap quarters found. The mother had got "char-ring" to do and Muriel Anastasia had looked after the family.

Miss Farrish described the mother as a small, energetic woman, who as a girl at home in England had belonged to the house-servant class and who had, during her youth, been much given to the surreptitious reading of penny romances, which upon her marriage and subsequent child-bearing had borne fruit in the selection of names for her girl children. Muriel Anastasia, Alantha May, Edwina Maud and Verona Mabel!

"Good gracious! do all that lot of people live on the mother's earnings?" I asked.

Miss Farrish smiled. "Indeed they do and you see what wonders Muriel Anastasia works in the way of comfort and cleanliness with it. She is as careful and

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thrifty as though she were forty and could give many a silly and improvident woman useful hints of the marvels to be done with a shin bone and greens or ten cents' worth of beef and mutton scraps.

One day I happened in at their dinner time and found them seated in a row on the floor, with a newspaper in front of them upon which was a large yellow bowl of pease porridge, which had a piece of fat bacon boiled in it, and each child had a thick piece of bread and was taking alternate bites of bread and spoonfuls of porridge. When the last scrap was eaten the bacon was cut in six pieces and each had one as a bit of dessert, with instructions to 'chew it fine, then it seems more,' as a finishing admonition." Of course such sheer luxury as tea and coffee and condensed milk was never to be dreamed of except as a great concession from fate in the persons of the settlement workers. We laughed a bit chokily, that is Nora and I did; Miss Farrish sees so much of the hard side of life that she says all of her tears have been shed and now she works, instead. I have decided that I shall dry mine with the same sort of handkerchief.

About the Duchess Miss Farrish was not talkative, only saying that she was the most remarkable woman she knew and the most helpful. I did not like to ask further, but I do so want to know about her, a woman with the distinction and manners of a feminine Lord Chesterfield, and a knowledge of four languages, besides English: books whose titles read, Spencer's *Data of Ethics*; Schopenhauer; Emerson; Balzac's *Seraphita*; Hegel's "—"; a Latin Horace, and others equally extraordinary to find in the room of a woman living in the worst slums of the neighborhood. The thing was too unbelievable.

When I took back the plates this week, Mr. W. said,—

"Mrs. Dimples, (of course he didn't *really* call me that) your work is far too good for this sort of thing, why do you not do 'extra illustrating'?"

I laughed and answered,—

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"Because this pays a regular sum and I cannot afford to sit idle waiting for rich collectors and people with the 'extra illustrating' and Grangerite fad to discover my talent. Oh, I hope some day to do that," I added.

He said nothing further and went back to his office and then I talked awhile with Mr. M., whom I like greatly.

As I entered the elevator Mr. W. came out of his office and rode down with me, walking the few blocks to Bassano's, for which place I was bound to look over some of the books I had seen reviewed, where he said good-bye.

He is a really well informed man and now that I know that the brusqueness is only manner, I can talk to him without any feeling of nervousness, especially as all of the advances have been from his side. I do rather enjoy having a mental sparring match with a good male intelligence, and his is decidedly that. I am surprised to find that such knowledge and taste is in conjunction with a very keen commercialism. As a rule they do not go together.

JAN. 22,—

Have been bullying Nora about the outlandish way she lives. The cracker and tea and jam diet is enough to ruin a strong constitution and hers is anything but that. I find that she is absolutely ignorant of the simplest culinary lore, and most wofully so of how to get the maximum nourishment at the minimum cost. Likewise does not like to "bother over these things." I have made her out a small dietary, which she has promised to struggle with and I shall watch to see if she does. She looks altogether too bloodless and poorly nourished. I evidently frightened her by prophesying a breakdown if she does not change, and she plainly has urgent need for the money she earns so she may do better now for herself. The more I know her the more I like her. She has simply lovely traits of mind and heart.



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The Torrelli's and my landlady seem bent upon looking upon me as the savior of their baby, which waxes fat and strong visibly, and I find, often, the funny little love offerings hanging on my doorknob. The last lot consisted of a wicker bottle of Chianti, which in a weak moment I mentioned having a fondness for; four little, smelly but delicious cheeses, a new (to me) kind of sausage, resembling in shape a fat mustard plaster, and a small pot of goose liver.

I remonstrate in vain. They shrug their fat shoulders up to their be-ringed ears and say,—

“Oh, 'tis nothing, nothing! and our blessed baby is so well.”

His Majesty, likewise, has taken to bringing me presents. The first was a pretty, dead canary and the next a very fat and long tailed rat, both of which he laid at my feet and was so palpably proud of that I had not the heart to punish him. The birdie I cremated and the rat I consigned to the ash barrel.

Nora and I went on a copper hunting expedition and found a beautiful samovar of hand-beaten “fire copper” with brass trimmings, a love of a jug with rim, handle and bottom of brass, and a tall brass candlestick. Nora got only a fat copper pot with an inlay of brass beaten into its rim, but oh! such a beauty. If I had not felt such a sincere affection for her I could have found it in my heart to envy her.

This district is rich in these things. So many Poles and Russians come over here with their household gods and either through stress of circumstances or a quickly developed taste for the things of the new world, sell or pawn their old world treasures. For my three finds I paid the sum of four dollars. Nora paid two for her bowl.

I likewise found, in the same bookstall where I bought the other books, a vellum covered Epictetus and a funny old *Swiss Family Robinson* (the latter with the wierdest

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wood cuts and a yellow board cover) for which I paid, respectively, sixty and twenty cents.

There is an old shop on — St., whose windows are given over to dust, dead flies, spider webs and incidentally some very good Dresden and a small collection of miniatures on ivory, which I shall some day investigate.

Am become a recognized member of the working fraternity now at S—— & Sons, and the elevator boy and the office boy are both my intimate friends.

The elevator boy, who by the way is a man of fifty, had given his fingers a fearful crushing the other day and was running the elevator with one hand. When I enquired the trouble he showed me the poor hand and it made me quite sick for a minute. I remembered an old time remedy of "Debbie's," which we used to apply to bruises and cuts and which was always most efficacious, so I bought the ingredients on my way home and prepared them as I had seen Debbie do so many times, and ran around with it late that afternoon. The poor chap was so grateful and I think from something he said not very well used to having anyone take any thought for him. Goodness! what a lot of "alone folk" there are in the world.

The office boy, who is a red faced, freckle faced Irish boy, as full of Satan as they make 'em, had a simply fierce cough that haunted me, until I had got him to take something for it that I brought him, and promise to wear a piece of flannel over his chest, and when, the following day, his cold was much better, probably owing as much to his exuberant vitality and the fact of the cold's having run its course, as to my small dosing, he immediately put the fact to my credit and now greets me with a "Good day, Mrs. Doctor." He is an irrepressible and reminds me of "Tom Scott." Now that he has taken me into his heart, he makes me one of the office family and generally walks on his hands to the door of the main office.

I told him that he reminded me of a boy in one of my

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favorite stories and nothing would do but he must read the story, so I bought a paper covered *Old Curiosity Shop* and put it into a denim cover and now he spends his time poring over it to the sad neglect of his other duties, I fear; but he told me, as he was going out the other day, that it was "a bully story and he'd like to punch the bloomin' head of that there Quilp" so the leaven is working, for of course he will never stop with that one story. I think I shall be asked to pilot his intellectual bark and I shall propose *David Copperfield* next.

FEB. 7,—

I've neglected my diary sadly these past two weeks and now I hardly know where to commence. As I was leaving the office about two weeks ago, Mr. W. followed me and said:

"I think, Mrs. Dimples, if you care to take it, I have a commission for you. It is to color some fifty plates in your best manner for an acquaintance of mine, who has been extra illustrating a *Complete Angler*. Here is his address and you can call on him and make the necessary arrangements. He would, of course, come to you, but he is an invalid and unable to get out much."

I was tickled and my face evidently showed it, for Mr. W. said with one of his funny, twisty smiles, that make his ugly face so kind,—

"That is right, keep right on staying young in your emotions, the world's too filled with sad grown ups"; and bowing, he went back to the office.

I fairly flew home where I wrote a note to the nice invalid man who wants his plates colored, asking if I might call on Wednesday, with some of my work for his inspection, etc., etc., then ran out and posted it and back to my den. Rapped on Nora's window and told her the joyful tidings, then settled down to get together the best



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plates I have with me to show Mr. Armstead; I suppose he's a nice old gentleman with a hobby, which for lack of ability to ride another sort of horse he runs to death. Am curious to see what selection he has made of plates for the *Angler*—that is a book I have always promised *myself* to extra illustrate.

FEB. 20,—

Went up to No. — — Madison Avenue on Wednesday and found not a “nice old gentleman” but a youngster of about twenty-two or three crippled so badly that he lies propped up on a sort of lounge bed, but as cheerful as a cricket, and before I knew it we were talking away as though we had been acquainted forever.

The plates I am to color are some of them, in fact most of them, ones I would have selected myself and I shall simply “joy” in the work.

He studied the plates I had brought to show him, carefully, and then said,—

“These are gems, just little gems!” and putting aside several, he added,—“These are done in exactly the way I would like you to do mine.”

Then we settled as to price, and I told him I must have at least four months for the work, as I could not neglect my work for S— & Sons, my means of obtaining regular supply of bread and butter.

He showed me many of his books and print treasures, and before we knew it the time had flown and it was four o'clock. His man brought in the tea and Mr. Armstead begged me to stay and drink it with him, and he is such a dear lad and so plucky in spite of his trouble that he had won my heart, so I stayed and we ate muffins and drank tea as cosily as possible and I amused him with accounts of the Torrelli's and their “love gifts” and told him of the settlement work and of Muriel Anastasia; so that finally, when I said that I must go, having stayed

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just three hours, he told me I had done him heaps of good and begged me to come again soon.

When I got to the door I found that he had ordered his brougham to take me home, so the neighborhood was electrified by the arrival of my humble self in all of the magnificence of a brougham, servants in livery, and a most beautiful pair of horses whose silver gilt adornments left the entire population in open-eyed and open-mouthed amaze.

I stopped in the fruit stand to tell the Torrelli's my good news and explain the carriage, then rushed up to Nora and told her all about everything, after which, as it was late, I stayed and got supper, whilst she worked on a rush order.

Have had tea again with the Duchess, to whom I went with some instructions and money from Miss Farrish. She is the right hand of the mission folk and it is through her that Miss Farrish gets all of the information she needs about the cases worthy and needful of help that the workers at the mission can give. The Duchess gains in charm and I am more and more wondering about her.

Took a ball and bat to the disgraced Tommy and had a talk with Muriel Anastasia whom I found sewing pinafores. As before, the little room was spotless and clean and the children as good as could be. I could not but contrast them with some spoiled darlings I know of and thought the contrast was all to their credit.

MARCH 18,—

Have again neglected my weekly scrawl and from now on I go back to the Saturday or Sunday summing up. My small existence has taken to being so full of events, that otherwise I shall forget to keep track of them, and this year, that started so alone and so stripped of everything that I had always felt sheer necessities before, is getting to be the most full and alive one I have ever lived.

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"Tom Scott" the second is now deep in *David Copperfield*, and when, thinking he was skipping for the story, boy fashion, I put him through an examination, I found the little rat was not missing a shade! Which is rather remarkable and I can only account for it by the fact that his thirteen years have been passed with those clever green eyes very wide open to all phases of life, and that his Irish quickness is sharpened to the limit. Just now he is breathing "death and last judgment" against Uriah Heap.

The elevator boy has also taken to calling me "Doc-tor" and when I strike an empty cage, which he sees to it that I do occasionally, he unbosoms to me. Poor chap, he has an invalid widowed sister and her little daughter, whom he supports. I am going to see them some day. He tells me that when the sister has a good spell she does fine needle work, and that the child, who is ten, takes care of the two rooms and cooks the meals, "like as if she was grown up."

I went to see Miss Farrish on Tuesday and found that she had gone to her cousin's wedding, the pretty Belle English of whom I have heard her speak. So I chatted awhile with some of the other workers and then went for a prowl, from which I returned the richer for an old book containing two really beautiful vignettes and a tail piece by Westall, engraved by Finden, which I shall put aside for extra illustrating.

Finished three plates for Mr. Armstead's *Angler*, that if I do say it as oughtn't, are lovely! and four that I think good. It is a queer thing, but given a personal liking for the subject of a plate I can do wonders, but if I strike one I do *not* care for I have to force myself to do it. Nora comforts me by saying that is because I am a "truly artist."

Nora, by the way, is looking wretchedly, and there is something troubling her for I have found her several times showing distinctly the traces of tears, and those



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beautiful eyes are mostly now so troubled; but she has not said a word about what is troubling her, so I cannot comfort her, but I do intend to see that she is with me more and shall manage to have her in to supper often, on the plea that I am lonely.

MARCH 25,—

March is certainly doing its best to go out in a proper lionlike way. I have never seen such a succession of windy, sleety, bitter days and the sky has been for the last ten a dull unbroken gray. Have to light my lamp at four, and when the spring comes it will get a welcome it never got before from me.

Mr. Armstead said one day when I fairly blew in, hat over my ears, hair tousled, cheeks aflame and generally the worse for weather, that he thought me the most fortunate person he had ever known, for added to my health, evidently marvelous to him, was the greatest capacity for getting the best out of everything; which I suppose was *apropos* of the fact that I had greeted him with the statement that it was a "glorious, blowy old day." We have become the greatest of friends. I find that he is twenty-six instead of twenty-two; lives all alone, except for the presence of an old aunt, who is so quiet and unobtrusive she doesn't count, and a houseful of old servants, who, one and all, are devoted to him. Has no other near relatives than the aunt whom he calls Aunt Pleasant; is very evidently a rich man and has a wonderful store of philosophy and submission. Also, as he like myself believes in re-embodiment, knows that the terrible affliction he is suffering under is the effect of a cause in the time gone. He tells me that he has his times of rebellion and bitterness, but he does not let them down him.

There is a great rejoicing in the Torrelli family because of the advent of a new baby, a girl; and I have

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been asked as a great favor to allow it to be called after me, so I gave them what I think the prettiest of my several names and shall do my duty later on with a christening cup.

Have discovered what my precious little Nora's trouble is, and quite by accident. I rushed up one day to tell her something too intimate to be told from the window, and not stopping for a "come in" to my knock, opened the door. Nora was sitting at her table, very white and still, and in a chair by her was the most lovely woman I have ever seen,—a face to dream of. She was loudly and vulgarly dressed and on her softly modeled cheeks were bright spots of rouge. Her hair was of the vivid red of black hair, henna-stained, and her whole appearance was so different from Nora's gentle refinement that when she said:

"This is my sister Claire," I could hardly believe my ears. I, of course, got out as quickly as possible and later Nora came over to see me and told me the story.

This beauty of a woman is her half-sister. Same mother, Italian father, who was a handsome, worthless, talented man, and his daughter inherited all of his worst traits, with a something of lowness and vulgarity he had never shown. Some five months after the mother's death he had given up his worthless life in a drunken brawl. Nora had assumed the responsibility of the child, then fourteen and already showing evidences of the extraordinary beauty and badness that she later developed to the full, and in spite of everything that Nora could do to restrain her, she broke all bounds and finally ran away with an Italian opera singer when she was eighteen. Since then she had gone from bad to worse, until the last stage of disgrace was reached when she and her lover were arrested, he for the actual theft of a large sum in money and jewels, she as his accomplice. Just a year ago she had come out of prison, where she had been for three years. The man had six years further to serve.

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By her first lover, the Italian singer, she had had a child, which Nora had supported; and now she was living the old, easy, disreputable life, coming to Nora for money whenever she felt the need of it. And the long strain of anxiety and horror, of shame and betrayed affection had been what had made my poor Nora so thin and wan looking.

I comforted her finally and went at length into my belief in the necessity for each soul's having to work out its own salvation, and we talked late, for I "felt" to tell her of my own personal experiences and some of the reasons that had made me break away from an environment on the surface so rich a one. And I think she went home feeling more cheerful, just for having unbosomed.

We women are queer creatures, even the most reserved of us feel the necessity sometimes of *expressing*.

Oh! and I have come across another interesting bit of heart history; it seems that our "big, splendid doctor" *almost* lost his heart to pretty Belle English, and she *almost* lost hers to him. But he would not give up his work, which I believe is the most effectively helpful I have ever known, and she would not or could not give up her life, and, as they were as wide asunder as the poles, there was but the frail plank of a love which, on her part, could not have been very deep, it seems to me, or she would have given up anything to bridge the chasm. So nothing but heartaches came of it.

Anna told me this and added that she did hope now that the doctor would realize that mere prettiness was not everything, and as I looked surprised she said in a whisper,—

"I do get so angry at men! There's Martha Farrish, worth a dozen of her silly little cousin, interested in every one of his interests, and surely they would seem fairly ordained for life partnership and he goes on sublimely unconscious of it all."

And now that I have been given the hint, I wonder I



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have never seen it all before. Why, Miss Farrish's face becomes fairly beautiful as she talks or listens to him and those big, clear gray eyes of hers are certainly not indifferent, but I doubt if he has ever known it for a second. Once again for the thousandth time I realize that beauty is the great motive power old Dame Nature makes use of for the attainment of her ends—clever old thing that she is.

APRIL 2,—

Blue sky and a wee bit of mildness in the air. I am going to take a day off next week and go out to the park and interview spring. Am curious to see if there are any signs of her ladyship. Of course down here there are not now, beyond the fact that there are some early primroses, which must have been forced, as we have had fierce weather until a few days ago.

I walked up to Union Square yesterday and it seemed to me that I could see evidences of buds to come on the trees, and the sparrows were there in flocks. If this weather continues, in a month the city will be lovely. I once heard New York spoken of as a hideous place and I was indignant and disgusted that I could not take up the cudgels for my beloved city.

My small bank account is "doing nicely, thanks," and I am feeling very happy and content with my work.

Mr. Armstead is pleased with the plates and when these are finished wants me to do some others of rural England for the *Shelbourne* and *Dreamthorpe* he is extra illustrating, so I can see my way to a month in the country, say in August. I shall make Nora go along and we will go to a little place I know away up on the Maine coast, where we can have both sea and fields and a life out-doors, with some books, our oldest clothes and no fear of meeting fashionable folk.

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APRIL 15TH,—

I organized a picnic for Wednesday last! Miss Farrish, who loves the "promise time of the year," the busy doctor, who is a veritable boy, and myself.

We rented wheels at the cyclery near the park, and with our lunches strapped to our handle-bars, we started.

There were evidences of spring everywhere and the air was exquisite. We investigated every cycle path and rode out Riverside Drive and camped for lunch in a field beyond Claremont, quite near the ferry, where we ate our sandwiches and drank our beer with the appetites of savages; then wheeled slowly home, stopping at the cafe in the park for tea about four, and very contentedly watched the smart traps and their smarter occupants as they passed. All of us had been the possessors of just such "smartness" and had given it up, as not being worth while, so our hearts held no bitterness of envy, only relief at the freedom and a realization that we had chosen the better part.

As we were going out of the park the doctor took off his hat to a fine portly old man who was passing in a coupé and who barely nodded in answer. I saw Miss Farrish glance quickly at the doctor, then away, and the doctor's wonderful flow of spirits seemed dampened after that; so we rather silently rode down in the car, after giving up our wheels. But, except for the one incident which luckily came at the end of our day, we had a jolly time, and if I can get these two busy people to try it once more, say in May, we shall take to the road again.

The old gentleman was the doctor's enormously rich father, who, it seems, strongly disapproves of his son's choice of work and has cut him off with the proverbial shilling in consequence. Poor old man, what a lot he is missing when he cuts himself off from that fine, strong soul. Oh! why do parents so often play the petty ty-

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rant? Why can they not recognize the fact that every individual must express himself as best he can and that parenthood should not spell tyranny, as it so generally does?

Last Saturday I sent the plates to the office, as I was going to have Nora, Miss Farrish and the Duchess to a studio feed on Sunday and wanted the time to do some cleaning up and some cooking. The boy I sent returned with a note from Mr. Warren, saying that he would send the new lot of plates in the afternoon.

About three o'clock, as I was polishing Martha, with a large apron on, my head done up in a dust-cap, and a most disreputable pair of old gloves on my hands, being a sight for the gods, I answered a knock to find Mr. Warren at the door! I do not know who was most embarrassed for a minute, then the absurdity of it struck me and I laughed and asked him in.

He had brought the plates and my weekly money, "being in the neighborhood"!—I'd like to know what for!—and I took off my gloves and did the honors.

By now my little den has taken on an expression of cheerfulness and real prettiness: my bits of copper and brass and Dresden, my four shelves of books, the walls decently covered with some of my best sample plates, which I have put in *passepourtout*. The geraniums with their clean green and red on the sills make it a cosy and homey place, and the small artistic disorder of my worktable gives the needed note. Altogether an exemplification of "high thinking and simple living." Fortunately my masterpiece of lamb ragout for the morrow's dinner had been put out on the shelf, and the air in the room was free from culinary odors.

Mr. Warren soon lost his slight air of shyness and looked over my small possessions with interest. It appears that he is a collector of old china and miniatures, so I told him of the shop on — St., which he did not know of; and now I suppose by that act of generosity I



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have lost a little miniature "La Princesse Lamballe," which I have coveted and which I intended getting next month, if I could, for it's the gem of the lot to my notion. That's the worst of being a collector, it warps all of one's native generosity of feeling. I feel it possible to hate my dearest friend, if said friend gets one of my coveted treasures.

He told me that he had seen the plates for the *Angler* at Mr. Armstead's and thought them the best work of the kind he had seen. And then we talked of everything and I learned a lot of the "secrets of the trade." Oh, ye gods! what a lot of sheep the dear public is, and how it does love to be bulldozed!

My little clock struck four whilst we were in the midst of our talk, and he jumped up as though he had been electrified, begged pardon for the length of his stay and said he had enjoyed his chat greatly.

I did not ask him to remain to tea as I had some things to do, so we shook hands and, after my warning to look out for the turn in the stairs, he disappeared.

Goodness! I am getting quite a number of acquaintances and here the process of mutual selection holds good, so there is the nice feeling of being wanted and liked for myself. Oh yes, life is awfully worth while living and to think that I ever had a shadow of a doubt of it amuses me now; "it did not at the time."

APRIL 30TH,—

An epidemic of typhoid has broken out in our ward, and Miss Farrish and the Doctor are working like mad.

I went up to see the Duchess and she told me that Mrs. McG. had been taken ill and sent to the hospital, where she lies at death's door. So, as Jamie is the only one making anything and that only two dollars a week, Muriel Anastasia is moaning over the probability of having to give up the three youngest children to a Home.

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I remembered how interested Mr. Armstead had been in my accounts of the family, so I went up to see him and told him of the trouble. He had once asked me to let him help in our work so that I felt free to tell him, and he gave me a hundred dollars which will keep the McG's for four months, and Muriel Anastasia will be able to keep those precious "kiddies" of hers with her.

I went around yesterday to give her the hundred dollars and found that the news of her mother's death had just reached her. Poor little soul, it was very pitiful to see how unhappy she was. We have decided to pay for the simple funeral of the mother, so she can have the hundred dollars clear. Her one gleam of comfort came when she realized that she could put off the evil day of parting with the children. Of course it can only be delayed, for even with the miracles she can work with that hundred, they won't last more than four or five months at the most; and as the children are all too small to earn money yet, it will be impossible to keep them together.

On Wednesday it was so beautiful and the spring spirit got into my blood so hard that I shut up shop early and, taking an open car, rode up to the end of the line and back, and on my return stopped in at the settlement house and begged an invitation to supper.

Miss F. looked fagged when she came in and when she told me what she had seen and done that day, I did not wonder. My admiration for her is so great. Oh, what a splendid woman she is! And later as the doctor walked home with me, having come in to bring some medicines just as I was leaving, I could not refrain from expressing my admiration.

"Yes, she is one in a million! To know her is a most liberal education in heart and soul lore," he said, almost reverently.

The Duchess came with a list of things Miss Farrish wanted me to get for her the other afternoon and I made her stay and have supper with me. Afterwards, as I was

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showing her some of the plates I am doing for Mr. Armstead, she recognized one that I had put in a passepartout, that I might enjoy it whilst I was at work on others, and she looked at it carefully.

Then she told me that when she was in England once, she came across a little package of his plates at a stall in the tuppenny box, which some vandal had torn from a book or books and that they proved to be first impressions and valuable.

Then we exchanged anecdotes of "finds."

Again as I was showing her a piece of Dresden, she told me how, as a girl, when she was travelling in Europe with her father they had gone to all of the potteries, and how she never could see a piece of the old world ware without its bringing up a series of pictures. She gave a little laugh as she added,—

"All that was long, long ago, my dear, in what often now seems a sort of dream world to me."

I was fairly bursting with curiosity and interest and had to exert all of my powers of control to keep from begging her to "tell more," but that was all of herself that she told.

Her sharp eyes also have seen the appropriateness of a union between the doctor and that blessed Martha Farish, but when I ventured to hope that he would realize it she shook her head doubtfully and said,—

"I fear not, my dear; men love beauty of face and body and our Martha has it only of the heart and soul."

MAY 4TH,—

Have fallen into the habit of remaining for a bit of gossip and tea with Mr. Armstead whenever I go. The boy seems to enjoy hearing about what he calls my "slummies" and insists upon it that my visits do him heaps of good. He is very curious to know about our little Duchess and one afternoon taking turns at it we wrote out



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what we have named "The Duchess of Cat Alley," and as we both have vivid imaginations we have woven a good story. If I am ever well enough acquainted with her or she takes me further into her confidence, I will read it to her. Mr. Armstead has typewritten two copies so that we each have one. Typewriting is one of his relaxations, he says, and he can write with remarkable speed.

I told him once that if he lost his money he could keep the wolf at least two fields away, and then he laughed and said,—

"I could do better than that. I've another accomplishment that you don't know of and, to tell the truth, I don't tell anyone of it as it is not considered exactly a manly one."

He rang for his man and told him to bring the box from the further end of the room and there I saw a quantity of the most wonderful embroidery. Such coloring, such fineness of work I never before have seen, even at the art needlework schools. I was so lost in admiration that the pathos of the thing did not strike me until I had left and I am glad it did not, for if it had I never in the world could have hidden it from him. As it was, my apparent acceptance of the thing and admiration of the work, my taking it as though it were a regular and accepted thing that had nothing of strangeness or unusualness in it, bridged that gulf successfully, and he insisted upon my taking a lovely portfolio case as a little souvenir of our friendship. I shall never look on the beautiful work without seeing a picture of the dear boy making the best of his sad plight, with the fine serenity and acceptance of fate, that many a well, strong and so-called manly fellow would find it hard to emulate.

Mr. Warren walked home with me the other day, and I invited him up to have a cup of tea. Nora and Miss Farrish came in shortly afterwards, and a few seconds later, the doctor.

We had a very charming time, my older friends put

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Mr. W. quite at his ease, and he came out splendidly under the combined influence of the tea and our cheerful chatter. He is another of the "lonely ones" for he mentioned casually that he had no relatives and did not easily make friends. I cannot understand why, for he is a most companionable man. I find that he has a great affection for my dear, crippled laddie, and agrees with me that the boy has been and is most plucky in his acceptance of the rather terrible limitations of his life.

"Tom Scott," whose name, by the way, is Tom Finly, has finished *David Copperfield* and now is deep in *Domby and Son*. He informed me that "that there Dickens must have been a real, live one," with which bit of criticism I heartily agreed. I can see now that he will not stop short of the last blessed one of the stories.

MAY 15TH,—

Am not sticking quite to the weekly summing up, but the days do fly so. Went to see the sick sister of the elevator boy and found a pale, sickly woman of thirty-five or so, whose ill-health had soured her temper and whose complaining, peevish voice was hard to bear. I pitied my friend the E. B. The little daughter was a nice little thing whose careful, old, small face might have belonged to a woman of forty. How quickly these children of the poor take on the look of years! My heart goes out to them.

The room I was received in was very neat and comfortable and the sick woman tidy and free from that atmosphere of neglected body that is one of the hardest things for me to bear. One could see that while there was certain poverty, it was not of the sordid kind, and she told me that besides the work her brother did during the day he did some wood-carvings, evenings. Poor fellow, it can hardly be a pleasant life, having to listen to the fretful repinings of the sick woman and having all

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his kindness taken for granted. The woman even complained to me that her brother "had no ambition" or he would be doing work that paid better.

The little girl came downstairs with me to open the door and, I think, more to tell me that "Uncle Ned was the kindest man and I must not mind what mother said, she was so poorly that sometimes she said things that sounded as though she did not realize how kind Uncle Ned was."

That was my first experience of fretfulness in these poor souls of the harder life, and afterwards when I spoke of it to Miss Farrish, she said in her kind, sensible way,—

"Well, you have been lucky, my dear, and when you remember how much downright peevishness and discontent there is amongst people whose lives are laid in places that would seem sheer paradise to our poor folk, you must not be surprised to find it occasionally everywhere."

MAY 22ND,—

Last night I had a shock. As I was taking my evening constitutional about five-thirty, I saw little Alantha May, ahead of me, linger a second as she came up to old "Goody Nan's" apple stall, and as Nan was busy with her work of polishing fruit at the further end, I saw her quickly take an apple and run as if possessed. I had not seen the McG's for some days and thought I would follow up this incident with a call and try and get speech with Alantha May. I stopped in at the mission and saw Martha, but did not say anything of what I had seen, only inquired if she had been to visit the McG's since the week before.

Yes, she had, it seemed, and was worried over the way they all looked, "Why, quite starved, sort of lean and hungry," and when she spoke of it to Muriel Anastasia,



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M. A. flushed up and the tears came to her eyes, but she did not say anything. "Of course it must be the air of the place. It cannot be anything else, for since she was given the hundred dollars she cannot really want."

I listened, but made no reply for suddenly out of nothing had come to me the reason of the children's pinched looks, and Muriel Anastasia's tears. Why of course the poor, dear thing was keeping them all on the lowest possible diet to stave off that dreadful day of separation by making the money last longer. I could have cried like a baby.

When I got around there I had some difficulty in climbing the long, steep flights, for I had bought various things at the corner grocery, and in my endeavor to avoid touching the greasy walls, tripping over my skirt, or dropping the bundles, I was breathless. On the top landing I collided violently with Muriel Anastasia who was rushing along with whimpering Alantha May in tow and as we recovered from the shock and recognized each other's voices,—for it was by now too dark to see one other distinctly,—she explained that "that bad, wicked girl," shaking poor Alantha May, "had been and stole a apple" and she was taking her to beg forgiveness and give it up.

I thought it better to let her execute her project and said that I would go in and see the children, as I had some things for them.

I found the three small mites all sitting in the middle of the bed, having promised not to stir until the return of their sisters, and so I amused myself by undoing the various packages and starting a fire in the little stove, which was suspiciously cold and tidy looking. Then I opened two cans of soup, heated it, and filling three bowls, started those blessed brats to filling up their little "tummies" with soup supplemented by large slices of bread and drippings. Arranged the rest of the things on the bare shelf of the forlorn cupboard and was feeling better when Muriel Anastasia and the prodigal returned.

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Goodness knows what had been the scene, but evidently a hard one for the small sinner.

I begged pardon for having made myself so much at home and bustled about re-filling the bowls of those hungry youngsters, who were in such a state of beatitude that they were speechless. Then I made Muriel Anastasia sit down and eat, and gave the repentant one a bowl of extra thick and noodley soup and a reassuring pat on the despondent small shoulders, thinking she had been punished sufficiently. After a little I left and went home to my own supper.

I spoke to old "Goody Nan" about it to-day and she shook her old head over Muriel Anastasia's severity, saying,—

"Bless the child, but she do take on as though nippin' a apple was a crime. She most frightened that child into fits, telling her she'd be took away to jail in the 'black Maria,' but she's a certain wonder, that Muriel Anastasia. Why, a body'd think her forty, she's that old and settled like."

I was greatly amused to find that "Goody Nan" was much more disposed to be lenient with the small sinner than commendatory of the small saint.

JUNE 2D,—

Oh, such heavenly weather as it is! I find it hard to settle to my work. The fields call to me and the woods. Have played truant twice in less than a fortnight, once with the doctor and Miss Farrish, once with Nora; and heavenly days they were. On Wednesday I am going to take the McG's out to the park for the day. It seems that only Muriel Anastasia has ever been, and that but once, so I shall have the time of my life watching them.

Alantha May has been restored to partial favor with the head of the house, so does not look so woe-begone as

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she did. I have had a talk with Mr. Armstead who has thought of a way to give the entire lot a full year's life in the country.

It seems that the care-takers of a place of his want to go back home for a year's visit and the position is one that Muriel Anastasia, with her intelligence, could fill equally well, as it is only to keep dust and damp away from rooms now almost never used. There is a big garden and an orchard, which with the home farm is rented to a neighboring farmer, and they can have their fill of vegetables, fruit and milk for the going for it. It will be just heaven.

I am to break it to M. A. the day of the picnic, and I have begged the fun of taking them to L. and seeing them installed.

I asked Mr. Armstead,—

“Why don't you go there sometimes if it is as lovely and quiet as you say?”

“No, it's too quiet,” he answered. “Although I am not of this life here, still I like to feel it all about me. I am a city man. Like Charles Lamb, I cannot bear to be away from the sound of the Bow bells which, in my case, is Trinity Chimes; but the old place belonged to an old aunt, who loved me and was like a mother to me, so I cannot bear to sell it; and I just keep it from going to rack and ruin, that is about all.”

Mr. Warren is now quite one of our small coterie and improves with knowing. He, it seems, has discovered “Tom Scott's” mad devotion to Dickens. Just now he is with “Nicholas” at “Dotheboy's Hall” and Mr. Warren came across him enacting the scene of the “Uprising” with a lot of other boys in the building, he being “Nicholas.”

I asked Tom the other day, what he was going to be when he became a man and he said,—

“Oh, a writer-fellow like Dickens.”



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I admired his modesty! He really is a most amusing youngster and as I talk with him occasionally am amazed at his quickness of perception.

Am trying to get Nora to go with me to Bassett Beach for August. She wants to, but seems not to think that she can.

I have twice met her sister Claire going up to her room and once I am certain that she had been drinking. Oh, what a hard time we lay up for ourselves when we go counter to our best! Of course some of us escape the consequences in this life, but we have to pay our debt some time. Since I know the law and its workings, I look with doubled pity upon the poor souls who are doing their penance in the form of fearful physical ills—the blind, and crippled, and diseased; and lucky is my crippled laddie that he has come into a knowledge of the law, for it does make it easier for him to bear it.

JUNE 15TH,—

Here I am at my old tricks of letting my diary severely alone, but it has been a time of such excitement and business that I really justified my disloyalty to myself.

First on the list of happenings, I think, was my taking the McG's *en masse* to the park. I made it a Sunday picnic, because I wanted to get that good little Jamie in and likewise "Tom Scott," who, being of such an advanced age and of much executive ability, I made my right hand in marshalling my small troupe.

We left at nine o'clock on a perfect day with our lunch put up for us in individual packages, easy to distribute and carry, and I think I can safely say that never a "shiny-cleaner," more beaming lot of youngsters ever started for a day of fun. Likewise a dirtier or more proudly tired lot never left the park gates when five o'clock came. Mr. Armstead had given me ten dollars to treat with, and although I know I should, by rights,

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have spent it in more practical ways and let the children get all of their fun out of the joys of grass and tree, frolic and fun that cost nothing, I did not follow that "still small voice" of practicality, but instead they were allowed to fairly riot in swanboat rides, donkey rides, goat carriages and all and every one of the joys, so much matters of course to the average child, such undreamed of rapture to my poor things. "Tom Scott" was invaluable and kept the band together as a trusty collie does his sheep, when the wildness of rioting spring claimed them for its own and they wanted to climb everything climbable, lie prone upon every grassy slope and kick up their heels generally. It was a great success and will be talked of for ages.

I broke the good news to Muriel Anastasia and the poor thing was as if stunned. I went over it all a second time before she could realize its truth. Then she put her head down and cried with joy and nothing would do but I must let her go some day and thank the sick gentleman for his goodness.

After Mr. Armstead had written and made the necessary arrangements I took the children down to their new home.

We arrived at four o'clock and found a big, old, three-seated family carriage awaiting us, with Mr. Frost, the tenant farmer, holding the reins of a couple of strong farm horses, and we piled in, bag and baggage.

The drive of two miles was beautiful and made to an accompaniment of exclamation such as,—“Muriel Anastasia, look at those little cows!” “Oh, Mrs.—, see all those curly-haired sheepses!” And, “Oh, Jamie, see the water flowers!”

When we arrived at the big, roomy, stone house we were made welcome by Mrs. Frost, the farmer's wife, who had come over to the “Great House,” as it is called, to make us feel at home, which she did well; and, after she had explained the duties to Muriel A., showed us all

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over the place and assigned to the McG's their quarters, nice comfortable rooms and kitchen, and to me, as guest, the state bed chamber (whose old mahogany made me gasp with envy) she took her departure, leaving behind her a veritable wake of good things.

We ate our first meal on the broad, vine-shaded, kitchen porch.

I remained four days and wished a thousand times each day that Mr. Armstead could see what joy his kindness had brought to these poor waifs.

Muriel A., I feel certain, will make no sinecure of this position, but keep everything spick and span and the so long closed, musty, handsome old rooms will be as sweet and dustless as though the owner were expected daily.

Besides their living, Muriel A. is to get ten dollars a month and Jamie a dollar a week for looking after the chores for Mr. Frost, whose last boy had left him just when we arrived. I can see the kind hand of my thoughtful laddie in all and my heart is very full of gratitude to him.

Every evening when Muriel A. puts the small fry to bed they say a prayer for him and it ends with "Please God, make the sick gentleman well in the legs again." When I first heard it I nearly strangled between the desire to laugh and the surety that I must weep. Bless their grateful little hearts! When I told him of it he did a little of both and as we are become such good chums, he was not ashamed of the tears shed before me.

Mr. Warren slipped and broke his ankle and when I heard of it I straightway wrote him how sorry we all were and said that if he found time hang heavy and wanted some cheering up, to let us know and we would come in relays to liven him up.

His reply was prompt, and Nora and I one afternoon donned our best and, stopping first for a big bunch of field flowers, we went up to — St. and rang the bell of a tall, stooped house. A cross looking housekeeper



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opened the door and, I thought, very grudgingly ushered us into her master's den, where we found our invalid looking very wan and ill, and with his foot and leg in a plaster cast. It seems it was a very bad break, not only of the ankle, but of the leg, and the doctors look grave and think there may be complications. After we had said the things that we had to say about how sorry, and so forth, we were, we put in the remainder of the time making him forget his pain.

Nora played for him,—the dear, thoughtful thing had brought her violin,—and I told him all about the installation of the McG's in the "Great House" and every other bit of news that I thought he would enjoy hearing.

Then we made tea, and afterwards we had a Kipling hour. Altogether it was a great success and we left in fine feather with the most urgent invitation to come again, and "oh, please, good Samaritans, soon." So we said that we would go around the following week, and in the meantime the doctor and Miss Farrish will go.

"Tom Scott" informed me that the "boss"—meaning Mr. Warren—was a "first class feller" and that he guessed that on the next Sunday he would "go up and see the old chap." The sentiment being commendable, I only lightly dwelt on the enormity of the phrasing.

The bump of reverence is conspicuous by its absence in that young hopeful, but there are a number of other bumps that are very prominent. Some day I shall have him go and get a chart, for if I am not much mistaken, there is going to be, in the words of himself, "something doing when he gets growed."

I told him I thought he should go to night school and he has taken my suggestion under consideration.

I asked him the other day if he was not tired of Dickens yet, and wouldn't like to try someone else?

He looked at me in great disgust and said,—

"Say, Mrs. Doctor, what ye givin' me?"

He confided to me that "that there Muriel girl was a

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corker with the children and no end smart! guessed he'd marry her some day, and he'd always thought a feller'd ought to get a girl what was used to kids, so she'd take proper care of her own, and say Mrs. Doctor, d'you see how slick all them kids was washed and toggged out? That's the kind of a girl for me." Evidently one of the bumps on that knobby head of Tom's is philo-progenitiveness.

I have talked Bassett Beach to Nora until she stops her ears now when I commence to plan, but I intend that she shall go if I have to chloroform her and abduct her bodily. She is looking wretched and I know is worrying over that sister.

I hope I shall some day have an opportunity to talk to that airy person. I feel it in me to tell her a few plain truths.

JULY 20TH,—

I make no more excuses to you, my good diary, for I have no new ones and the old ones are worn threadbare.

Mr. Warren is accepting with exemplary patience what promises to be a long confinement to the house and has had the back wall of a room on the first floor knocked out bodily, a wire netting put in its place, potted plants and hanging baskets about, rugs on the floor and basket-chairs and tables scattered about, so, as it has an eastern exposure, it is delightfully cool, shady and comfortable on these warm afternoons.

The summer is early and hot and we all have taken to dropping in to tea with both Mr. W. and Mr. A. about four-thirty on these sultry days. If only it were possible to get our two invalids together, so we could all gather about the mildly festive board at the same time, it would be jolly, but it seems a problem to get either of them moved. I did suggest an ambulance to Mr. Armstead upon which his bed could be lifted, but he turned

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so queer and white at the thought I never again broached the subject. So we just divide up forces; the doctor and Miss F., Nora and I, that seems the way it falls out generally.

On the first, I go for a month to Bassett Beach and have hopes of getting Nora to consent to go.

I saw her sister Claire last week one afternoon and I asked her to come up to my room for a moment as I wanted to consult her about Nora. She came very reluctantly, but I did not give her an opportunity to back out, and when I had got her seated by the window and I had taken a chair between her and the door I outraged the "sacred" rights of hospitality, and I gave her a proper talking to. I don't know just what it all was, for I lost my head I was so angry, and finally when I had reduced myself to mental pulp and was on the verge of tears, I stopped. The poor thing was in even a worse plight and I saw that I must quickly control myself and her or there would be a fit of hysterics. So I pulled myself together and undid some of my good work, I fear, but she was finally calmed a little and now I am glad I let myself loose; for the talk, if it could be called that, has borne fruit already and Nora received a note from her saying that she had joined a troupe of vaudeville artists,—save the mark!—and was starting immediately for the West; so that is a good many steps up, as it means work. Nora can once more draw a breath free from fear, and I shall take advantage of the opportunity presented to win her over to the Bassett Beach trip.

AUGUST 20TH,—

Well, here we are in the proverbial clover and *have* been for twenty long perfect days, as we arrived on the evening of the first.

My little Nora looks years younger and worlds better and we are going to stay until September eighth.



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Such days of sun and sea breeze, of loafing on the sands or short trips inland to the pine woods! We have been so lazy and so comfy.

Are installed with a nice old couple in a tiny, ancient, stone cottage, only a few minutes' walk from the beach. We get good, plain, country fare and we live, eat and sleep out-of-doors, for I promptly moved our mattresses out on the veranda the very first night. One can sleep in rooms when one must, but here we choose to have nothing to do with four walls, except to dress between.

Miss Farrish is to come here for a much needed rest on the twenty-seventh, and go back when we do on the eighth.

Our two invalids wrote us that we are missed woefully, and I answered that there was no reason, if that was the case, that they should not join us, bringing our big doctor along as attendant physician. Have as yet had no answer.

Received a long and enthusiastic letter from Muriel A., who is evidently taking both the position and herself very seriously, and who gave me a lengthy and detailed description of the great house-cleaning she had undertaken.

Jamie, good little chap, has settled to his work as "chore boy" quite as heartily, and M. A. says that he intends to be a farmer. Does he? Bless him!

Also, I hear that "Tom Scott" appeared one Saturday, at supper-time, having procured a half-holiday and wanting to see them all, had taken a ticket to W., and walked the rest of the way, a good sixteen miles. Good for Tom. Any boy who is willing to walk thirty-two miles to see and be with his "admired one" for only a few hours, certainly deserves a cordial reception.

I am much amused over the affair and I have not the slightest doubt in the world that if Tom stays of the same mind in regard to Muriel Anastasia for a few years longer, there will be a wedding on his hands. These chil-

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dren of the poor are very precocious in their mating and settling. One sees young mothers of fifteen and fathers of nineteen and twenty all about in our neighborhood and I have changed my views in many respects, since coming into close contact with humanity, about many things.

Near us is a little fishing village; the people are a kindly, rugged folk, not unlike their own rocky coast, and I wish time and again that I could sketch. Nora does very good work, singularly unamateurish, talented soul that she is, and we shall bring back a fat sketch book with us.

I wrote in one of my letters to Mr. W. about things here, and he, with his quick thoughtfulness, sent by return post his camera, delicately taking all sense of obligation away by a request for some "shots of the place and people." So, furbishing up my rusty knowledge anent photography, I went merrily to work to make a companion book to Nora's and have been so lucky already that it waxes fat with pictures. The little "God of Chance" loves beginners and so my "snaps" have turned out well. We rigged up a dark-room and after a little experimenting I got the hang of the washes.

SEPT. 7TH,—

To-morrow we leave for home, and most reluctantly. These last two weeks have been glorious fun, for our invalids and Miss Farrish and the big doctor have been with us. It was all arranged so easily that we were sorry it had not been determined upon earlier. Miss Farrish stayed with us, and the three men and two servants with a neighbor, whose old rambling farmhouse could comfortably hold them. So it has been one long, jolly picnic and we find that even the daily meeting does not make us tired of each other.

We have had heavenly long days on the beach, reading,

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sketching, and talking; evenings before big bonfires, when Nora played, Mr. W. sang,—he has a fine voice,—and my laddie and I told stories. We are decided that such marked talent as we possess must be given to a larger world and this next winter we are going to write a book together.

Great larks it has been and we are all freshened up and looking and feeling like different people. It's good to go back a few years, oft-times, and be young again.

Miss Farrish has certainly grown pretty. Something has come into that good, kind face of hers that brings a lump to my throat. Oh, why doesn't our doctor see how splendid she is and love her and want her? What veritable bats men are! Much as I like him and hugely as I admire him I could find it in my heart to shake him into a realization of things. Ah, me! I am afraid our small Duchess is right, men see only prettiness and seeing that, are quite content to believe all other gifts go with it; which, thanks be! they don't or else where would our just old law of compensation come in?

This afternoon we had our last clam bake and invited all of our neighbors, so it was a jolly affair, and as we have grown very chummy with them all, we have had many cordial invitations to come back next summer.

Oh, what a dear old world it is and what a supreme gift life is, always given good health: that is my only requirement of it. All of the rest I feel quite capable of adding at my own sweet will, and the things I win or get by my own efforts are heaps more precious to me than the things I have not earned. I often laugh when I think how happy and content I am in my new life, and I wonder how I could have waited so long before coming into my own. Oh, that old life of luxurious, easy-nothingness, with no grip on life's verities! It takes a different temperament from mine to belong to it and keep happy!



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SEPT. 20TH,—

I seem to be taken with an attack of "diary conscience" once in so often. I don't dare look my earlier promises of "weekly summing up" in the face.

When we arrived at home, the entire "Sunny South Colony" greeted us and we found a great surprise. Our landlady, dear old soul, had cut a door through on the upper landing so that Nora and I could visit without having all of those stairs to climb, as there was no chance of any rooms being vacated in either house so that we might live together.

Our rooms were clean and shining and our cupboards filled. New pots of plants on our sills. Our curtains had been laundered, and everything that was shineable polished to mirrorlike brightness, and all of the kind, jolly folk beamed upon us in a most heartwarming manner. The feeling of being liked quite for one's self is very gratifying, I find.

Of course, this new arrangement makes for an immense amount of comfort, and I have taken over the commissary department. Nora really does dislike cooking and fussing and I like it and seem to have a gift for it. She takes the dusting and general "redding up" on her shoulders, so things go already as though they always had been so arranged.

The first Sunday we had our Duchess up to dinner and the doctor and Miss Farrish came in about eight.

Went around to see the invalids after my work was done on Monday and found them both chafing at the hardness of their lot. It was funny, but I hid my amusement and jollied them up. Those two weeks of fresh air, sunshine and out-of-doors just spoiled them for going back to houses and confinement, not to speak of the deprivation of our society.

I told my laddie that if he felt so miserable he'd better go down to the "Great House" for a month.

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"What, alone?" he asked reproachfully.

"Yes, why not? I answered. "And as far as that goes, you won't be alone. There are the six McG's."

He got quite huffy with me so I left a kiss on the top of his curls and went away.

On Tuesday came a repentant note and a perfect load of plants. He knows I do not care for cut flowers. Poor fellow, I suppose he is lonely in that huge barracks of a place, with only a timid, silent old woman and a crew of old servants.

I was talking with "Goody Nan" in front of her stall, day before yesterday, when the Duchess went by carrying a basket, and as she passed she said over her shoulder,—

"Martha F. wants to see you," and hurried on.

Old Nan said,—"Now ain't she a saint for certain! and to think on! just to think on!"

"What?" I asked quietly.

"To think on her a-livin' down in these parts and a-workin' for all these good-for-nothin's, she as has a right to live in palaces and ride in kerridges."

Like a goose, I said,—

"Oh, do you know her, Goody?"

The old woman looked at me for a moment, then she turned away to her work, saying,—

"Just what we all knows, Miss, she's too good for this sort of livin'."

And I saw that I had spoiled my chance of hearing. After I had thought it all over I was glad after all; if our little Duchess does not care to tell us of herself, we being truly her friends have no manner of right to even want to know. I must not let my little code of "friendship ethics" get cloudy, that 'won't do, but when I told the laddie about it, he was wild and wanted me to go straight away and "make Goody tell," and I could not get him to see my amended point of view.

"Tom Scott" informed me when I went to the office

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upon my return that he had commenced night school and had a "bully teacher." Likewise that he had visited the McG's, seemed to be more than ever approving of Muriel A.

As I was prowling about an old book store one evening about six-thirty, who should I find but Tom, and when I said,—

"Well, Tom, and what are you doing here?" he showed me a life of Dickens,—Foster's,—that he had just bought for fifty cents. It was in good condition and I told him he was in luck and wished him joy of his find. He left me there and the man in charge said,—

"That's a keen one, that boy. I'd like to get a boy like that for the shop, do you think he'd come, Miss?"

I said,—“Why don't you ask him if you want him; I would, and I hope you'll get him, for I think it would be good for him to be in a place like this for awhile.”

I told Mr. W. what I had done and he said, laughing,—

“So you propose to take our best boy away, do you? Well Tom will never leave, he likes too well to be where he can skylark with the other lads.”

I said nothing further, but I was not surprised when Tom called on me the other evening and told me he was going to quit S—— & Sons, and go to work for Mr. J. I drew him out to find what it was that prompted the desire for the change, and discovered that he wanted to be “with all them old books, you know,” and had a desire to learn what it was that made all of my kind of folks like 'em best. He looked over my books approvingly and I explained about values and plates and gave him an idea of what it all meant. Likewise made his little green eyes sparkle when I told him the tales of some of the famous finds that had been made.

“Hully gee, but it's great!” he exclaimed, “that's the biz for me!!”



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OCT. 1ST,—

Am just miserable and would like to cry. Mr. W. has asked me to marry him and was so dear and gentle that I found it hard to tell him how impossible it was. First, for the good and sufficient reason that I was already supplied with one able bodied husband. Second, because I did not love him. It seems he thought me a widow, so I told him my little story and we parted good friends, but oh, it won't be the same again. Something has gone out of the nice comradeship and something has come in of a different kind. I would give anything to have seen what was coming and prevented it. Oh dear, I thought my day for attracting that sort of experience was over and done with. Thank goodness, the doctor or my laddie have no such thought, so at least my two other male friends are still to be enjoyed.

I think Mr. W. has unbosomed to laddie for when I saw him last he looked at me in a different way, and I could, I imagined, see a sort of wonder in his expression.

I went around to the settlement house and corraled Martha F. for a talk and told her about my perplexity. She, too, looked as though she wondered, and I said,—

“Now, for goodness's sake, tell me what makes you have that expression, Martha, it's like the laddie's?”

She laughed and said,—

“Why, my dear, I was only surprised at your surprise. All of us have seen how the land lay with our kind Mr. W., for a long time.”

I was speechless. Then I was properly mad.

“Well I think, that being the case, you might, some of you, have been good enough to have told me so I could have prevented it.”

“But, girly, we thought you were content for it to be so and would marry him.”

That reduced me to silence for a moment. Only a mo-

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ment though, and when I left, Martha had a very clear impression of just what I did feel and that my life held no room for that particular brand of sentiment. She, also, had thought me a widow. Goodness, I must wear a placard saying: "Owing to incompatibility of temper, I and my husband have agreed to disagree, but out of a vast fund of mulishness he will not give me a divorce, said mulishness being one of his *good* qualities; his bad ones you are free to judge by that."

It's hateful! I wish I were a man or ugly and dowdy. No, even those last two things do not save one from the tender passion.

"Tom Scott" is installed in the book-stall, and is so happy that he wears a deep frown to hide the fact. Likewise has adopted a sort of uniform of his own invention, being a cross between a grocer's clerk and the artist of the funny papers. Is letting his hair grow, wears a soft shirt and a big soft tie whose flowing ends afford him a vast amount of pleasure. The woven straw sleeve protectors and large black apron complete the remarkable "ensemble."

Nov. 6TH,—

This has been a time of stress, but very pleasant stress—I find that much abused word is generally taken to indicate only unpleasantness, which is a pity.

First on the list of good things is the announcement that our dear Martha F. and the big doctor are to be married. It seems that our doctor has not been as blind as we all thought him, and loves her as she deserves to be loved. They are to keep on with the work, only fitting up a little home of their own in one of the houses adjoining the settlement.

We, of course, are all to be at the wedding, which will take place in the big hall of the house, so that the people who know and love them both, can be with them. The

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wedding is to be on Thanksgiving Day and the simple ceremony to be followed by a wedding breakfast, to which as many of the guests as can be accommodated, will be invited. We have great plans afoot for decorating the big hall and intend the event shall go off with great *éclat*.

Mr. W. and I have overcome our little difficulty and shall remain the best of chums I hope.

Went with Nora for a Saturday to Monday visit with Muriel Anastasia, and it was a joy to see how all those blessed "kiddies" were rapidly taking on the appearance of being fattened for a county fair. The unusual plenty, simple though it is, has done its work; in the heart-to-heart talk we had the evening of my arrival, M. A. said,—

"Oh, Mrs. —, if only poor ma could see 'em, I should be quite happy."

Alantha May is developing quite a gift for housekeeping in all of its branches, and at odd times works on her needlework, which just now is a set of pajamas for their "good sick gentleman," which she is doing by hand, and which is a marvel of fine stitching. Its crowning glory is to be a tiny wreath of flowers about collar and cuffs, and a monogram on the pocket, and she expects to finish it in about "six more months."

I carried the joyful tidings to M. A. that the place was to be hers as long as she wanted it, for the old couple who went home have decided to remain there. She was overcome with joy and showed me the next day how nice everything looked.

When I returned, I told laddie he ought to go there and see for himself how lovely the old place looked, and he said he would if we would all go along. Since he has discovered how possible it is to get about I find that the old life of passive acceptance irks him and I'm glad of it, for with all his wealth and gifts for "soshing" as Nora calls it, he might have a very rich and full life, even though he cannot but be hampered by his poor body.



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I have decided, after the New Year, to give up my trade work and set up as an illuminator and de luxe plate colorer. I shall, I now see, be able to make at least as much and probably more and have the joy of doing my best work.

Nora and I are very happy in our *ménage à deux*; we have arranged to use her room for our studio and sleeping room and mine for all else. Both are now so pretty with their books and sketches, old copper and brass, not to mention several really perfect bits of china and some miniatures. Both of us have the undoubted true collector's "flaire" and when we have shown our finds to some people who know, and told what we paid for them, there has been great lifting of eyebrows and in one case an expression of absolute disbelief.

"Tom Scott" came up to the studio in great excitement one evening to show us an etching that he had seen in a rival stall and got a friend to get for him. And well he might be excited, for it was a Hogarth—all of the hall marks were there, as they not always are, and it seems that the clever little chap had recognized it from having seen its facsimile in an old book of engravings. That boy is going to be a wonder! Mr. J——, his "boss" as he calls him, says that he never saw his like. Tom goes regularly to school and tells me he likes it. Already I notice a difference in his speech, but I hope he will not too quickly lose his delightful originality of expression.

Nora has had the little niece put in a good school and gets reports that please her. From Claire she has heard no word, but that is so on a par with the lady's general carelessness that it creates no wonder.

I recently met the pretty cousin of Martha Farrish, who has returned from her long honeymoon abroad, and she is certainly a most winsome bit of femininity, tender and true hearted, I think, in spite of the fact that she could not give up her life to our big doctor, but I hope she will keep to her own side of the fence and not come throwing those beautiful big eyes about on Martha's. I

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am quite jealous for Martha, I want her joy to have no slightest cloud and my faith in the male animal's constancy is, to put it mildly, weak. So I want the pretty Belle English Ferguson person to keep her loveliness and her French frocks in her own back yard, please ma'am.

Nora was very severe with me when I gave expression to my feelings on the subject and "scorned" me, saying,—

"You ought to know our doctor better. I am really ashamed of you, Dimples." (That's her name for me because of my wealth of those silly things.)

The little Duchess, who was having tea with us at the time, laughed and patted me on the shoulder cheeringly, and remarked,—

"Our girl is a trifle pessimistic, but even she must admit that there is truth in the old adage that every rule has its exception. No, I've no fear in the world that our doctor will give even a thought to any amount of prettiness, now that his eyes have been opened to Martha's beauty of soul and character; and besides, happiness has performed once more the miracle of giving beauty to a woman who before had been plain. Did you not notice how lovely her face had become?"

"Yes, I had noticed a change, a great change, but still I wanted the pretty Belle kept away"; upon which declaration the Duchess smiled and Nora frowned.

I don't know what has got into me lately, but the spirit of matchmaking is having its way with me, and noticing the growing chumminess of my laddie and Nora, the thought has come to me that here is a case where two people, by nature forced most cruelly to keep aloof from mating on the physical plane, still are so congenial and both so truly beautiful in character, that an ideal union on the mental plane might be effected. I said so to Mr. W. in one of our recent talks, but he seemed so visibly shocked by it that I felt I had been guilty of a great indelicacy, for which feeling I don't thank him and shall

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tell him so some day. I am afraid I have not the much vaunted trait termed "fitting reserve." I like to know always where I stand in my small world and frequently bring down upon myself the wrath of the gods!

Nov. 29TH,—

The wedding is an accomplished fact, and everything went most beautifully. I cried until my nose was red and my head ached, but every one was so interested in the bride that no one noticed it.

Martha never looked so well in her life. She had chosen a simple white silk of some soft kind, and her really magnificent hair was done becomingly. Her dear face was truly beautiful in its expression of happiness and I could not but feel that if ever a man had chosen wisely and well it was our doctor.

We made the hall a perfect bower and the great bell of chrysanthemums was a triumph.

Martha's uncle, Belle's father, came, also Belle and her husband. The doctor's father had a convenient attack of gout and did not. Every last, living soul in the neighborhood who could by hook or crook squeeze in, came.

The presents ranged from a check for five thousand dollars to a pair of guinea pigs, and after the ceremony we sat down, a hundred strong, to the wedding breakfast.

At two the bridal couple slipped away and we others left in charge kept the festivities going until five, when the last well stuffed straggler took her departure and silence fell upon the place.

Our happy pair went for a short trip to Bermuda, and when they return will take up the work again.

"Tom Scott" escorted us home and confided the fact that when he and Muriel Anastasia stood up he intended the event to take place at the settlement house.



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DEC. 15TH,—

It has been decided that laddie give a house party at the "Great House" for the Christmas week, and I get hints of great preparations on foot.

The other day when I had gone up to take back some finished plates, I found the laddie queerly silent. Usually he is as talkative as a woman with me, and thinking him in one of his very rare moods of depression I was intending to get away quickly, when he said,—

"Mrs. Dimples, I want awfully to tell you something for I am in a state of indecision and want to be helped."

"Talk away, laddie," I said, laying aside my wrap and gloves, and then followed the most wonderful half-hour that I have ever known. It seems that I was not so crazy as Mr. W. thinks, for the boy is deeply in love with my Nora and is only fearful of telling her as he cannot imagine that any woman can love him! Oh! beautiful wonder of a great love! There was no thought in his mind of Nora's maimed body, no thought that he, having what he has, is therefore a great catch for any daughter of an ambitious mamma, and that such a life as he can give a woman,—ease and luxury and the thousand delights wealth can procure,—would be a temptation to many a worldly minded one, and doubly, trebly so to a poor struggler in the world's great vortex. To him, the fact of his afflicted body puts any natural advantages he possesses so in the shade, that I truly believe the dear boy will only feel that he is the recipient in such a companionship.

I was so glad that I told him I, too, had thought of it, and my matter-of-course acceptance of the thing gave him the necessary courage when Nora came in shortly after. I slipped away and left the two dear things to themselves.

My little Nora came to my room on her return and in her lovely tender fashion told me that laddie had asked her to be his wife and that as there was no reason for

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their waiting long they were to be married on Christmas Day at the "Great House" and remain there awhile.

I hugged her delightedly, and she, when I taxed her with it, admitted that she had loved him almost from their first meeting, but of course had never dared hope that he would or could love her with her twisted body and her limp. Never a word of *his* crippled condition or his great wealth, and I am certain that not a thought of the latter had come to her. It is a clear case of two souls that recognized their affinity, bless them both!

When I saw Mr. W. and told him, he was distressed and I did not leave until I had brought him around to my way of thinking and made him properly apologetic for the bad quarter of an hour he had given me, during the talk we had had on the subject before.

DEC. 31ST,—

Am back in my quarters, feeling pretty lonely, for my Nora is no longer here.

The house-party was very successful and everyone had a glorious time. Mr. W. gets about on crutches now and entered into the spirit of the time with as much vim as the rest of us.

The big house was, for the first time in years, filled with people. Every room had its occupant and every chimney sent out its long smoke plumes. Laddie's old servants took charge for the time and things were made so comfortable and pleasant for us all that it was hard to leave.

The weather came nobly to the aid of the Christmas sports and there was snow and heaps of it. All of us that could get about put on warm hoods and wraps and gloves and we made snow figures and forts, played games and went for sleigh-rides, and evenings gathered around the big fire-place and told stories, popped corn, roasted chestnuts on hot shovels, baked apples and were for the nonce boys and girls again.

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On Christmas Day our two dear ones were married and this time I kept from crying, feeling that no slightest sign should be given that this was any more solemn an occasion than similar ones are, and after the ceremony was over we had a Christmas dinner that was a marvel.

My heart went out to the old servants, who had entered into the joy of their dearly beloved young master so entirely that they welcomed their new mistress as though she had been the bride they themselves would have chosen for him.

Nora, always beautiful in face, was so exquisite in her joy, and the creamy lace of her gown so concealed her deformity, that she was a lovely picture, and the laddie did not take his glad eyes off her all the day.

Muriel Anastasia won the servants by her graceful acceptance of their help; and Molly, the cook, told me that "sure the child was a wonder entoirely, and as forethoughted and capable as any woman, and a deal more than most."

As even the most charming of house-parties must end, this did on the twenty-ninth, and Mr. Warren, "Tom Scott" and I traveled back together, a little subdued and quiet after all of the busy days. I came up to my den struggling hard not to give way to my depression, and found the dear little Duchess awaiting me; knowing it would be a lonely home-coming she had thought to be here to welcome me. She had Martha at a white heat of expectancy and a nice little dinner ready. His Majesty arched his back and purred with gladness.

The Torelli's had left many little love gifts and so I could not but feel myself a fortunate woman, and loving both Nora and the laddie dearly, I must perforce be glad in their happiness.

Now, it is good bye my diary. I have not always been faithful to you in the past, but I promise to be in the future and on this last night of the old year I will put a kiss on your nice old familiar face and wish you the best of luck.



# A Cross Section of Life

## PART I.



EIL, what did he say?" she asked anxiously.

The big fellow looked at her a moment—silently:—

"Arizona or Southern California—and—immediately."

"So bad as that! Oh no, dear, it can't be, oh, it can't be!"

He put his arm about the slight figure and drew her towards him.

"Yes, dear, it evidently is, and I have been sitting in the park an hour or so, before I came home, trying to get over the worst of the shock. I think I have and I don't intend to give 'way or give up as long as there's a fighting chance, and that is what Doctor Atkins says I have. Now, sweetheart, help me. You are such a blessed woman-girl that if you will be your own courageous self, we will take this hydra-headed monster by the throat and throttle him."

She shivered all over for a moment, then lifting brave eyes, tearful but determined, to the gaunt, hollow-cheeked face above her, said a bit tremulously,—

"Brave I'll be, Neil, and thankful there's the fighting chance. How soon must we go—or can we go?"

"Come over to the sofa, we'll get it all mapped out, I am as weak as a rat."

"Lie down, dear, I'll sit by you. After such a long, hard pull as you have had these six weeks, no wonder you are weak. Here, let me throw this cover over your feet and tuck another pillow under your head."

She established herself by his side on a low chair, and taking one of the big, white, thin hands, said,—

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“Just wait for another six months, until southern suns and winds have done their work and these big ‘pads’ will look natural again.”

He smiled into the face near his, saying,—

“Do you know, Dot, that if it were not for the necessity of dragging you so far from here, I should not be half sorry about going, but when I think how terribly straitened we shall be as to money, if I must give up my position here and we must be dependent upon that tiny, (with a groan) that microscopic bank account, I just get scared all over.”

“Well, you need not be, Neil. What we have will keep us going for long after that poor sick lung is all right again, and you know we both love the camping-out proposition. Let’s just fancy that is what it’s going to be. Then we won’t even think of the superfluities left behind. As for feeling badly because you will have to take me so far away from home, as you call it, don’t you know—you ought to by this—that wherever you are spells home to me?

Sometime, ages from now, when you have become a famous horticulturist, for of course that’s what you’ll be—Oh, I know how your very soul has longed for your favorite work, and how you have hated the office and its confinement;—well, some day we will come back here for a trip and we shall have been children of nature so long that we shall be filled with wonder to think we ever endured it.

I believe you would have been, long ago, a cow puncher, or a miner, or something of that sort, if you had not met me, and eventually would have had great herds of cattle, or have discovered some big mine.

Why I have laughed to myself dozens of times to see how you hated the restraint and the narrowness of city life; poor old fellow, if I had not been such a selfish thing you might not have had it, either. But I had to wait until you nearly died before I could get it through

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

my stupid head that it was not New York, or family, or friends, or in fact anything in life that counted, but just *you*.

So we will go on our tramping trip and when we see some place that our hearts go out to, we will buy a few acres, put up a shack, send for our treasures and settle there.

You can plant and dig and fuss to your heart's content and I will be your admiring audience. Incidentally, I will bring into play my housekeeping abilities, those poor atrophied gifts, and we'll be as happy as the day is long.

No more dress-clothes for you. No theatres, no any of the things your soul loathes. I will let you go about in those dear old Adirondack togs of yours, with soft shirts, and not a suspicion of a collar, and if you must you shall kick off your shoes and go about in your stocking-feet. No more can mortal wife promise."

The big man laughed heartily at her chatter; so heartily that the ugly cough that followed tore and rent him, leaving him faint, white and utterly spent.

After Dot had ministered to him and he was once more comfortable and she saw that he might doze, she pulled down the shades and stole out of the room. Going to her bedroom, she pillowed her head on the bed and cried for awhile, then got up and, bathing her eyes and re-arranging her hair, went into the kitchen, where she held a long talk with Mary, the servant; then wrote a note which she dispatched by a messenger, and when it was shortly answered in person by her brother, she told him what had occurred and of the necessity for their getting away as soon as possible.

"Dick, we shall have to be awfully careful about the expenditures, for we have very little put by," and as he started to speak, she said,—“I know what you are going to say, dear, but I won't let you do it. We can get on very well, with care, and you have your own burdens



## CHUMS

and must not carry any of ours. Anyway, as yet there is no need. You can be of tremendous help in other ways, though. Break the news to mother and the girls and pack up our traps for us. Get rid of this apartment. I think the WELANDS would be glad to sub-let it and rent the furniture or buy it—that would be best, for I never did like the pretentious stuff,” looking disapprovingly about at the handsome, showy things. “Our books and pictures and pretties, box and store. When we settle where we can have them, I will send for them. For awhile we will just be gypsies.”

Her brother looked at her curiously. She had always been one of the soft, dimpled girls, who had, from babyhood, been shielded and coddled; and this show of courage and determination, of practical ability, came to him as a surprise. As his life, most of it, had been spent far from her, he had never learned what character and strength lay underneath the soft exterior.

She smiled a little sadly as she saw the look in his eyes,—

“Oh, the girl Dot has grown into the woman and finds her woman’s work cut out for her; but don’t think I am downhearted. I *was*, awfully, but I’ve got over it and that great, blessed fellow in there, who’s as weak as a baby now, is going to get back his strength and health, please God, but until he does I must take the burden of decisions and arrangements off those huge shoulders. So, like a good fellow, fix it up with all of the dear ones, and make them understand that there is to be no show of emotion.

I am only going across the continent,—people do that in our day as a pleasant little break in a winter’s monotony,—and for goodness’ sake don’t let them come to see us off. Mother will have hysterics and the girls will weep and Neil will be made to feel like a thief and a murderer for allowing himself to get ill and being obliged to go, let alone the enormity of taking me along.

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I think they would quite cheerfully see the dear fellow start for any old place, if he would only leave me behind. They have never quite given up feeling what they think was his presumption in marrying me. They don't lay it up against *me*, strange to say, but they always act as though they thought he had hypnotized me or something like that. It used to make me frantic, but I'm over that now, what's the use?"

Her brother laughed and looked as though he quite understood.

"Thanks be, Dick, you did not fail to understand, did you, why I loved Neil and married him, though he was only a clerk in an insurance company?—which in mother's eyes seems about on a par with being a day laborer, apparently. There have been times when I could have shaken them all, literally and figuratively, the times when mother has been very much 'Grande Dame' and the girls, 'Princesses Royal'; and Neil has been *so* dear about it, he is so big souled and big brained that he does not even see the smallnesses of others. But you've been an understanding dear, and I just love you for it," and she reached up to kiss him.

"What a dot of a girl you are," he said, as he leaned over to kiss her upturned face.

"I'm not, really, Dick, it's only that all you people belong to a race of giants. I'm about average height." And as she saw his amused face, she said,—

"Well, I notice all of you big men capitulate to the midgets; there's your own wife, she's about the size of the proverbial pint of cider, and cannot take your arm without nearly dislocating your shoulder. Dick, I know you are very busy and it will be hard to find time, but I want you to promise to write to Neil sometimes, tell him all of the city news, and that sort of thing, for he thinks you're the 'best ever,' and I don't want him to feel that *all* of my family are brutes.

Now I must run and see how he is. Don't come in

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now, but tomorrow, when you have seen the Weland and done some of the other half hundred commissions, come in and let us know how things are going.

I want to get away by Monday, that leaves four days. Neil must not risk another relapse. Good bye, dear old boy, and a thousand thanks in advance."

\* \* \* \* \*

One sunny day, six months later, Dot stood on the platform which served as veranda to the tent, and shading her eyes with her hand, looked down the hill to the beach, where the waves rolled in lazily; the air was soft and a slight breeze was filled with the smell of the sea.

Presently she saw her husband coming up the road which wound around the hillside, and her sweet face lighted as in answer to his hail she ran down the path to meet him.

His great frame was now comfortably covered, the face had lost its hollowness and had taken on a look of health; there was still a suggestion of delicacy, but the tones were not the grayish ones of six months before; there was a good red tan that told of life in the open.

He made a pretense of being unable to further carry the bundle of mail and she relieved him of it, laughing merrily.

"Bad boy that you are," she said, "wanting to go on being petted and helped, when you could pick me up bodily and carry me to the top.—Oh, but there's a heap of mail, though," as she peeped into the canvas sack. "And did you get the butter and the tapioca? No sir, you forgot. Well, but you got those blessed seeds, I see," holding out a package accusingly.

"By Jove! so I did forget," he answered, "I will just run along back and dig up that butter and glue."

"No, you won't," she said, clutching his sleeve, "you will come home, and as a punishment, watch me eat the last bit of butter on the hot biscuits, whilst you go but-



## *A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE*

terless." And as he looked thoroughly repentant, she said,—

"There is enough for tonight, dear, and tomorrow you can get it when you go down for the other things."

They had built a shed at one side of the tent and put wire netting around two sides of it, which gave them an out-of-doors dining room and kitchen; and sitting at the small table they could look out towards the sea and watch the sunsets, which they never tired of doing.

The small place was fresh and dainty, the walls painted green, the floor tan, the various cooking utensils hung in a cupboard, behind a curtain. A few shelves held the little stock of china, of pretty, fanciful Japanese designs; baskets of ferns and trailing plants were suspended from the ceilings. The small sheet-iron wood-stove stood in a nook of its own, where the air circulated freely; there was a tiny cave-like cellar dug into the hillside, back of the tent, which kept their food cool and fresh.

At the back of the tent was a bath-room formed by a roof and sides of tea-box matting, wherein was a large zinc tub and a shower. And all about the tent and its two sheds, were planted nasturtiums and sweet peas, whilst long rows of boxes held plants in various stages of growth.

The tent was a large Tucker tent, whose double roof, low side-ventilators, and two front opening flaps gave the maximum of air and the minimum of discomfort from the sun's heat.

It had green matting rugs on its board floor; two camp beds; several packing cases converted into chiffoniers and toilet tables, by a deft adjustment of shelves and curtains; and on the canvas walls were pinned many sketches. A long, low set of shelves held books and magazines, and a folding table had become a writing-desk.

There was an air of comfort and prettiness over all.

"Hungry, Neil dear?"

"Famished, Dotkins,—some goodies?"

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"Yes, are you ready?"

"Bet I am,"

—and the big man came into the dining room and took his seat at the table, whilst Dot stuck an interrogative broom straw into the biscuit.

"Just mix the salad, that's a dear, whilst I dish up," she said. "I nearly came to grief with my ragout, for it stuck, whilst I ran down to meet you, but I don't think it will taste scorched," sniffing inquiringly, "but most of that heavenly macaroni is at the bottom, and I dare not scrape it off. Oh, well, there's plenty without it, but I won't ever leave anything without an asbestos ring under it again. Never saw such a stove, four small pieces of kindling, two shavings, and a pinch of excelsior create a conflagration. I often think of that expensive, heavy range, with all its shiny nickel trimmings, back in the flat, and its fits of the sulks; and here is this blessed three-dollar-and-a-half baby of a stove, that cooks to perfection, and any time it does not it's my own fault, as today.

Want some tea, or milk, Neil?"

"Think I'll have tea, as I missed it this afternoon. Did you have any callers?"

Dot laughed. "Yes, three—the Voogans and Miss Allmish. I made tea for them and gave them some of your cookies. The V's I can feel it in my heart to be grateful for, but Miss Allmish does get on my nerves."

"What was it today?"

"Oh, the same old thing, tales of past grandeur and detailed accounts of the lives of rich aunts in Washington. Poor thing, I wish I could tell her how to go about it to forget the past grandeur and make the most of the present limitations.

Speaking of the present, Neil, Mrs. V. says she thinks old Malcolm would sell us that twelve acres on the top and the other slope. Now his son's dead, he's thinking of going back to Massachusetts."

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She looked over at him as she spoke.

It was the first time that she had openly accepted the fact of the possibility of their settling and he answered the look with the remark,—

“So-o, the wind sets that way. Good girly! it’s just what I’d like. Some way all of the places inland don’t quite fill the bill, do they, now we have come to feel the sense of appropriation in this big old waterscape?”

“Yes, that’s it, Neil,” she said eagerly, “and you have made more improvement here in two months than you did in the first four at the other places. There’s a something tonic in the air and if we can get the Malcolm place, you will have plenty of air and sun, and land to work, anyway enough land for awhile. The house is only a ramshackle affair and if we take it, let’s pull it down and rebuild it. There’s enough timber to make a duck of a *little* place, and we can send for our traps. Oh, it will be jolly!”

“Yes, it will that, and yet we must go slow, honey, we have such a bit left.”

“Well, we don’t need but a ‘bit,’ as you call it. We can pay for the place and rebuild the house, you can do most of that yourself. Mrs. M. says that the vegetable garden has always given the family enough for themselves, and some to sell to the summer folks.”

“Goodness, Dot, you don’t intend to set up as a truck farmer, do you?”

“No,” she laughed, “but I should not mind earning a few extra dollars, if we had the things to sell. Oh, I have not any of that particular kind of pride.”

“No, you bet you have not, bless you,” he returned, squeezing the plump little hand that passed him his tea cup. “Well, after supper we will get down to figures and see what can be managed.”

He helped her clear away the dishes, and then they took paper and pencil and after much figuring, he said,—

“Dot, if we buy this place at his price and allow for



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the expense of rebuilding the shack and the cost of bringing out the traps from home we shall have only four hundred dollars left in the world.

Now if my idea about the carnations is all right, and I believe it is, well and good; if not, we shall be most properly 'up against it.' "

"No, we sha'n't. Even suppose your idea of the carnation farm not good, we could always sell the land for something, and anyway it would give us our living, so I think that is not much to risk.

One of these fine days Santa Monica is going to be the most popular place anywhere about, and this hill with its view and its accessibility to the beach and the electric, will be wanted by some one with an eye for beauty. Oh, I know this is supposed to be the very unfashionable part, given up to people who have to count the cost of living, more or less, but as these same people are in the majority in life everywhere and have elected to find South Santa Monica their very own, it's bound to grow. I'm not afraid, Neil."

"No, I'm not either, Dot, or I should not be a trifle later, when I feel quite all right; but I'm so nearly that, I fancy I may be safe in taking this responsibility. Of course if you were not such a small wonder in the domestic economy line I would not dare. How much has it cost us for the two months we have been here?"

"For food, twenty-nine dollars and twenty cents," she answered.

"Ye gods! and we've lived like fighting cocks! How on earth did you do it?"

"It was not difficult. Just never wasted a crumb, and used some brains and judgment. Necessities don't cost much Neil, it's the luxuries that cost."

He whistled softly,—“Twenty-nine dollars and twenty cents! And to think of all the poor beggars of clerks, working away in stuffy offices all of the years of their lives, to pay for some fool gimcrack flats in crowded cit-

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ies, to pay for fool clothes for themselves and families; to pay for all of the fool city life, which even at its cheapest is unwholesome and poor and expensive, when they might live out in this blessed land of sunshine, dress comfortably and be healthy and happy."

"Oh, you delicious old boy, but you forget, my dear, most people would think all this," waving her hand towards the tent, "not living at all. They *want* what you call the fool things and they would not at all like to wear what you call comfortable clothes."

"Don't believe it, little woman, don't believe it. It's only that they don't know."

Dot shook her head unbelievably.

The Malcolm acres were bought, the old house pulled down, and from its sound gray timbers, tinted by the hot California suns, rained on by the soft rains, was built a small home. Only three rooms, with two verandas, one looking seaward and used as living-room; the other veranda looking off across the valley to the line of hills beyond.

The books and pictures and pretties came, were placed where they looked their loveliest, and climbing roses, honeysuckle and heliotrope were planted. Everything was finished before the rains, and the small place had taken on a look of hominess already.

The land was got ready for the new venture, the kitchen garden was put in order and they found themselves with a much smaller surplus than they had thought to. But Neil's health was rapidly improving and both were filled with happiness and hope.

Mr. Malcolm had presented Dot with a small Alderney cow, a pretty, soft-eyed creature, and, as Dot said, so ornamental and gentle that she was a picture to look at as she placidly browsed over the big slope, and quickly grew to know them, coming to look over the rail at them as they worked in the garden.

Neil learned to milk her and the first dismay that Dot

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felt at the thought of the extra work the possession of the cow would bring soon gave way to joy, and she quickly learned to systematize things, so that the additional burden became a slight one. The pleasure of having all of the cream and milk they wanted to use was great. Both she and Neil were fond of every kind of cheese, from the smeerkase to cream cheeses, and cared more for milk than for any other beverage.

There was little difficulty in getting rid of the milk, after taking out the three quarts daily that one of their neighbors wanted, and they had set up a tiny churn; so with vegetables from their own garden, and milk and cream, butter and cheese, they were very comfortable, needing to spend but little outside. Dot had decided that they must have a few chickens, enough to keep them in fresh eggs. Then, let come what might, they could be unafraid.

They had both agreed that they would not become slaves to their work, but go slowly and realize that there was ample time to joy in living. They divided their time and their days so that at tea-time each day they might be free to read, chat and go for a walk; do, in fact, anything that they might want to do. As a matter of fact they rarely left the veranda. After tea, at four, they found that they had taken all of the exercise they wanted and needed during the day, which began with the sunrise almost.

This was a very happy time for both and when any anxiety as to the future came to them, they put it aside. They had both come to a realization of what life meant to them:—each other, health, simple living; and surely the future need hold no terrors for them, given these.

Dot had smilingly but firmly intimated that no one was welcome before tea-time, but all were very welcome then, and presently a little circle of congenial people got into the habit of coming up the hill to tea and the few whose tastes were different dropped away.



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Along the beach were rows of small cottages, mostly vacant in the winter, but filled to the roofs in summer, and Dot, who loved to watch people, promised herself great larks when that time came, for both the V's and Miss Allmish lived on the beach and from their windows or strips of verandas the crowds could be viewed.

One day when Miss Allmish had climbed the hill and was resting on the veranda and sipping her tea, she said,—

“Mrs. Amerton, I always envy you your sunshiny disposition and your outlook on life, and you have no idea how much better I feel when I have been with you awhile. I wonder if one can cultivate adaptability. I need it, heaven knows! and I try for it, but I do not seem to even approximate it. Between me and content is something I cannot seem to break down or climb over and life seems gray and not worth while, most of the time, in fact I may say all of the time, now.”

Dot looked at the tall, thin figure and hard, discontented face and wanted to say several things, but felt it better not to. She replied only,—

“Yes, I do indeed think one can cultivate contentment, but you know one must first have really come to the point of wanting it.”

As she saw a look of surprise on Miss Allmish's face, she continued,—

“You think everyone wants to be contented, don't you? Well, they do not, really, you know. I have known several who fairly petted and coddled the discontents and miseries they had or thought they had; kept them not only alive, but active and hard working. I have often been so amused to see it. But, of course, there *are* those who have known great sorrow and loss, who are heart, life and arm empty, who seem not to be able to get hold of themselves, poor dears. I am so happy myself that I hate to think of there being anything but happiness in all the world. And I believe everyone could find life

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worth living, no matter what the circumstances, given health. No, I won't even except that, for when I was at home, I had a friend who had worked for years and still does, for that matter, among the very poorest, and I have known of several cases where there was not only ill health, but hard physical suffering at times, and yet life was worth living."

Miss Allmish sighed heavily but said nothing further.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What are you scribbling, honey?" asked Neil, coming in one afternoon.

"You would never guess, Neil, I was trying to put down what I could remember of Theodosia's account of her returning to Tremont Street, after her operation. Remember how amused we were when she told it and acted it?"

"Yes." He laughed. "Let's hear what you've made of it."

"I have written it as nearly as I could, as she told it, a sort of soliloquy, but of course it needs her clever acting of it, to make it what it was to us. Wait for one moment, I must run in and give a stir to that rice pudding before I forget it. You light the lamp under the kettle, dear, and by the time I've spoken my piece, it will be ready for tea." In a few moments she returned and took up the first sheet of paper, reading,—

"Leaving hospital after operation. Amputation of left leg below knee.

Back in room which I was occupying at time of accident; which being up four flights of stairs, in low-roofed attic, had not been rented, and good hearted landlady had kept my few belongings until I could return.

Well, after I have caught my breath a bit, four flights with a new leg, not the easiest thing in the world,—I'll take 'count of stock.

Oh, bother, here comes someone!—Yes, come in,—oh it's you, Miss Earl.

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Yes thanks, am all right again, that is, I will be as soon as I get used to this thing (sticking out end of peg from below dress skirt).

Miserable, you should think? Well no, I'm a bit weak yet, but very thankful it was only one leg and some bruises.

Well, *you can* do something for me. I was just thinking I wanted a good cup of tea, tea without a hospital smell and taste, and then a chance to work out some plans; so if you will make me a cup, and come and sit with me awhile, I shall be obliged.

(She's a kind soul and sensible, I'll try some of my plans on her and see what she thinks.)

Ah, but this is good! to be out of the eternal smell of antiseptics and out of that atmosphere of pain and suffering. This little old room is a *dear*, and what lots of possibilities it has, with its four dormer windows and its big closets.

Had a lot of plans for making it into a jolly studio den, that last day when I went out to buy some curtains and got myself run over, like the veriest country bumpkin that ever was; but now, with one leg and a stick, I'm afraid these flights of stairs will be too much for me and I hate ground floors, too, in cities, without I was lucky enough to get a bit of a garden attached; that's different.

How kind this world is, I really believe Doctor Leonard and nurse Oliphant were sorry to see me go, and if it had not been that I was wild to get away from the hospital smells and sounds I, too, should have been sorry. Always did loathe the places. That is probably why I had to go to one. I find I generally *do* have to do the things I try to escape, and yet, what a Godsend they are, in spite of the fact that the public ward is not exactly like a private room, with all that that means of privacy and comfort. Heigh ho! I am glad, anyway, that I had the courage to go into the ward, for with the little money I have it would have been wanton luxury to have had a room.



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Ah, there you are, Miss E., that tea smells delicious. And cream! nice, sweet, yellow cream! And what a jolly little jug, diamond cut! I adore squatty jugs. Belonged to your mother and her mother before her? I thought as much; and these dear, thin, dented old spoons with an almost obliterated letter, Q—no G? Your grandmother's name was Gaylord? Ah!-h! how good that tastes. Aren't you going to have some? Why, your eyes are full of tears, there, dear woman, there, there—

—So you missed me and felt badly when you heard, and now seeing me with a peg, upsets you. Now, that's what I call dear of you, but don't be unhappy, I promise you I'm not. Only filled with thanksgiving that it was a leg, instead of an arm or death—for I love to live, just love to!

That's right, have a cup of tea. I think I will have another myself, and this nice thin bread and butter; how good it is. At the hospital they cut it thick and never quite butter it up to the crusts. Now I always like the butter thick on the crust.

What am I going to do?—Go to my folks? Oh, no! I never was much with them when I was whole and well fixed up as to dollars.

Am I troubled as to money and will I let you lend me some? Bless your heart; no, to both questions. I had just lost through another "country cousin" act,—a bit of silly speculation,—a good deal, in fact about everything I had when that accident happened, and had thought to put to use my one talent. Fortunately, the loss of a leg does not interfere with making gold letters and chubby cupids and garlands; that's the reason I took this room, first because it was sunny and high up with an outlook—I love roofs and fresh air—and I was going to make it pretty and use it to live in and work in.

Have I any money left? And will excuse you for this seeming curiosity? Why bless your kind heart I recognize it for interest, all right enough. Yes I have what

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will give me about thirty dollars a month, income. That seems not so bad to you? No? Well, I suppose it is enough to keep from starvation on, and I can earn enough for an occasional bit of copper or a book.

Don't understand? Oh, only I have a craze for picking up odd bits. Anything from a Colonial candlestick to a piece of Louis Quatorze marquetric. And my last collection, which I have been ten years making, I sold so I could have more money to put into that asinine speculation.

How could I bear to part with the things? Well, it was a wrench, but then, I thought I could commence all over again to collect. Ah, what joy to watch cabinets filling and walls being covered!

Any more tea in the pot, no? Oh, all right, if you have some more hot water you may make another round. It does seem to me as though I never in all my life tasted anything quite so good.

Oh, you've brought some cold ham and a jar of strawberry jam? Nearly six o'clock, so we might as well make it supper. Goodness! is it? well then, so we might, and I'll slip into a gown.

You have an idea, a thought, but you are almost afraid to tell it me. Oh, tell me, why should you be afraid? Ah, that is almost too good to be true. You want to join your fortunes to mine, you are lonely so much of the time. I am the only one who took much notice of you and you have grown to watch for me during that little month before my accident; you are one of the Marthas of life and your own little life does not give you sufficient cause for worry. Oh, bless your heart! so you want to add to your woes the semi-care of a demi-legged woman,—who is a bit of a tyrant, besides, verily!

You have also a nice little income of about twenty-five dollars a month,—are forty, and very lonely.

You don't mind if I give you a hug, do you? I do not hug many people, but you for some reason or other I

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have often wanted to.—Your hair is so fluffy and well cared for and, now don't laugh, but every morning, I used to hear you drawing water for your bath and I would say to myself, there is my nice, clean neighbor. No wonder her skin looks so clear and her eyes so bright. She knows the joy of a good daily scrub. And you noticed the same thing about me? Ha! ha! Now is not that jolly! So we have that bond in common.

Now I've finished that ham, I declare I don't believe you have had a bite of it—you have? Let me see your plate—well, I'll forgive you that fib, but no more. Too excited to eat? Oh, all right. It takes me differently when I am excited. I am famished!

Heavings! for a cigarette! What! you have some tobacco? You sometimes smoke one? A neighbor, a Spanish woman taught you and when you feel lonely you make one. Well, I am in luck, humph! a little dry. Smells like 'Lone Jack,'—it is. Ah—ah—but that is good!

For the first two months in the hospital I did not think of such a thing, let alone want one, but this last month I would have given a good deal for one.

Yes, I'll just sit here and watch the sunset and smoke, whilst you clear away the supper things.

Comfy? Oh so comfy. Only drat this stick! I wish it had a joint in its knee. It's awfully in the way, but then suppose it was an arm or both, and I could not roll my own cigarettes and was having some one with a disapproving face poke the cigarette at me without caring whether or not the tobacco was falling out into my mouth, and, too, knew she was wondering why you smoked the smelly things and how you had the assurance to take up people's time holding the horrid things for you when there was that lovely worsted work waiting, and Sallie Adson calling you to come and see the new lace collar she had made.

Yes, decidedly, there is much to be grateful for. Only



## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

a leg gone. And oh, I say but how jolly this is and how different the sunset looks from here, ah!

Yes, come in, oh you have finished! Dark! why so it is. I was dreaming and quite forgot the time. A little chilly, so you have brought some kindling and will start a little blaze? Yes, these May nights are still cool. Shut the window? Oh yes, the air is all right again, now. But when I first came in it had that shut up smell I hate. You like plenty of fresh air, too—always sleep with the windows wide open, so there will be a current. Well, I am in luck, to find a chum who has my two strongest manias, daily scrubs and air.

This looks promising, let's see how we stand all through. Jolly little blaze! Nothing like an open fire-place, even if it has but a rusty little grate, with a capacity for holding a good sized soup-plate-full of fuel. I suppose large fire-places, with old wrought iron fire dogs *and* big, sweet-smelling logs, do not go with fourth-floor backs at seven dollars a month.

Can you get me my slippers, yes, in that grip over there. Thanks, only one; the other being ornamental but no longer useful, we might convert into a receptacle for holding burnt matches.

Will I forgive you? Oh, you blessed goose, now see here, right here and now we will have this thing out. You are not to feel that you are hurting me whenever you forget this leg of mine and you need not give too much pity to me. I don't want it, and truly do not need it. I have faced the situation and got over the horror of it, and I shall not let it make me one little bit unhappy.

But my hair has turned gray around the temples, since I went into the hospital! Bless your heart, that is nothing, it is time it did. I am forty-one.

You would not have believed it? No? Well, I don't see why one need be wrinkled at forty. But I look about thirty, do I? That's jolly! I must have had a sheltered life? Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Forgive me for laughing, my

## CHUMS

dear, but if you only knew you would likewise laugh. A sheltered life! Oh, delicious! There, that has done me good, you are very tonic, my dear.

Now, for our voyage of discovery. Remember, when you were a child, the game of question and answer? Well, you begin. You would rather I did? All right.

Do you love books? Sometimes—Oh Lord! then you don't. People who love them, love them all times. But you think you do care a great deal? Read some every day? Do you, indeed! Well, consider that settled.

I remember now to have seen a what-not of books in your room, but if I remember rightly, they were theological works. Your father's? He was a Baptist minister? Ah, that explains. Your turn.

Do I like to be waited on? Bless the woman, she goes straight to the point. My dear, I do, I do. There are few things I like more. Can you have another question? Fire away!

May you take charge of our joint menage and wait on me as much as you want to? So you have decided it is to be a joint menage. So-o, now, look here, Miss E.,—

Call you Ellen? Well, if you will let me add an 'H' and make it Helen. My name is Theodosia. Fits me, doesn't it? Oh, yes, well. 'Gift of God.'

What am I laughing at? Oh, just a thought.—But to get back to our muttons.—Where were we or what was I saying?—

Oh yes, my predominant failing is laziness. All my life I have fought it, forced myself to tramp miles, forced myself to be active physically, but now, well, I cannot hobble very fast with this thing, so I shall just give way, and it will be an imposition on you, but as you say you *want* to be imposed upon—but see here, little woman, this plan is all very well for me, I can see where I shall be in the proverbial clover, but you, where do your innings come in?

You will be so happy to have some one to work for and

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

fuss over, and it does get so lonely having one's meals all alone and with only one there is not enough to keep one busy and then time does drag.

Time drag! Good Lord! Listen to the woman, drag! and every day but a silly twenty-four hours. Well that settles it—joint menage goes. Evidently it is my plain duty to teach this woman the value of time. I promise you it shall drag no more.

Ah, is your constitution a good one? Iron? That is good, you will need it.

Nine o'clock? Well, we will talk some more tomorrow and settle things.

Would I like to use your dressing room? There is hot water and as I am not prepared—

Ah, my dear, we were certainly made for a joint menage: yes, I *would* like, beyond words. Even my body smells of hospital. Will you get me out a night-dress and a flannel wrapper and hand me a couple of bath towels and my toilet bag?

Nice little dressing-room, big sitz-tub, cold running water, everything as clean as a whistle. Pretty chintz covered dressing-table, all sorts of little contrivances for comfort, and sweet and clean.

Oh, the luxury of it all! No hospital smells. Heavens! but it does feel queer to go hopping around on one leg, and a bit awkward. There! I've dropped my flesh brush and how on earth can I reach it? I cannot go crawling around dripping soapsuds over the floor—Oh, Miss—oh Helen, Helen, will you be so good as to recover my brush for me, it slipped away.

Thanks, yes, you can. It's awfully hard to reach the middle of one's back, especially if one has to do the balancing act at the same time.

Too hard? No. I like it. The brush is so stiff. Yes, I know, I keep seven going. One for each day, so they will get dried and firm. I detest squashy bristles. No wonder that my flesh is so firm. Yes, it's good solid flesh.



## CHUMS

—I have my work cut out for me now, to keep it down.—  
Thanks awfully.

Yes, that's the powder in the big silver shaker. It smells good? Yes, I put a piece of absorbent cotton in the shaker, with a few drops of essential oil on it and then pour the powder over it. I do love scents. Shall have to take a dried geranium leaf and verbenas for my sachets. No more at five dollars a bottle.

Will I put on an undervest? Oh, no, I never wear anything but my night-gown,—And you also?

You will clear up? Ah, my dear, but you are kind, and I am very grateful.

Good night, good night.

Ah, bed a bit lumpy, but it's clean and no hospital smell. Yes there is, too. I smell it. My clothes, of course. I'll just hop out and drop them on the landing until morning. They will be safe. There! Oh, that you Helen?

No, thanks, I don't need anything. I was just putting my clothes outside because they smelled hospitally. Good night. Ah, must not forget my truth statement: 'I, soul, self, am subject only to the law of the good, which now is working towards and through me, in infinite love and freedom. I have faith in its perfect out-working. It works in love and I trust it. The eternal good be for everyone.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah——Heavings! I nearly dislocated my jaw. I wonder what time it is? The sun looks awfully superior, as though it had been up a long time and had a great contempt for lazy folks. Wonder if that water I hear running is for my neighbor's bath, or mine.

Ah, but this air is lovely. Now, if there is one thing more than another that I like, it is to wake up and feel the air on my face and know that the room is sweet and fresh. Oh, what they miss, these dirty folk who sleep

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

with the windows closed, or open only a silly hand's width.

Well, Theodosia, my dear, you are at your old tricks—'so glad you are not as others are.'

Guess I'll get up and see what time it is, and see if that is my bath that is running—hop, hop, hop, I shall have to rig up some sort of an arrangement, a kind of crutch-stick to use until after I have tubbed mornings; I cannot be bothered putting on the peg-leg twice.

Yes,—come in, good morning! Yes, thanks, I slept like a good baby. Never once wakened until about a quarter of an hour ago.

Will I have my tub now?

Well, won't I just? What time is it?

Nine? goodness gracious! what a sleep. You look as fresh as a rose.

Will I have my coffee first?

No thanks, I like to get scrubbed and tubbed first, but if you will get me out fresh clothes—yes, the largest trunk.

They are pretty,—do I always wear such lovely things?

Umph! well I *have*, but when they give out I suppose I shall wear whatever I am lucky enough to be able to get. You see, my dear, thirty a month does not run to ten-apiece silk undervests and laced and beribboned pantities.

Plenty in the trunk?

Yes, I remember several sets of new ones I bought in Paris, that I've never worn. I wonder where Rogers put them?

Rogers? Oh, she is my maid. Or rather, was—when I found that I was a pauper I left Rogers in London with several other superfluities. Hop, hop, hop, hop. This little hall takes just six hops to cross.

Oh, what a good arrangement, I always like a shower, and was wondering how you managed your morning

## CHUMS

scrub: I did not notice by candlelight. The pipe and spray.—Well, if that's not almost uncanny. You must be a mind reader!

No, it's just your way.

Mine, too, my dear. Every one of my own pet arrangements, first tooth-water, a trifle warm, then the little tub of good soapy water, then the cold shower.—It takes no longer to get things accomplished with one leg only to get about on I find. There, that's done.

No thanks, nothing more, everything is handy. All right, I'll let you know when I am ready.

Goodness, but this cold water is heavenly. The fates be praised, water is cheap. Now if I had to economize on that, I should just give up.

Now, I'll hop across to my room and do my hair, slip into a shirt-waist and skirt and be ready in a jiffy.

Coffee, good coffee! Lovely smell! My little neighbor is astonishingly well up in the comforts, that is what I call the comforts, of life.

I wonder how you let the water out of this tub? Oh, I see, a plug. Now, that's clever, saves having to dip it out again; evidently connected with the drain pipe some way.

Ought to put the room to rights a bit. Ah, Theodosia, there is where you are going to miss Rogers, you are a novice yet. *Sacre Dieu!* that will leave a black and blue as big as a saucer.

Did I fall?

Well, yes, I sat down rather abruptly. Don't mind if you hear me knocking about a bit, I forget and try to walk on that lost leg, but I'll get used to it in time.

All right, if you will be crutch—there, safely arrived.

Oh, I say, Miss Earl, Helen, want to see something funny, look,—

I thought it would make you laugh, all these frills and insertions hanging around a stick. Now, as I believe in the eternal fitness of things, my beloved frills must go,



## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

and I will come down to nice plain, good looking panti-ties; besides, fancy seven pairs of these a week for the laundry! It would take all 'me wealth' to pay laundry bills.

Now, I wonder in what trunk that brown cloth is? Oh well, never mind, I can find out later. I'll put on a kimona for coffee.

Ready?

Yes, just a minute, until I twist up my hair, my glorious hair. Yes, it is nice hair.

Never saw prettier?

Ah, my dear, I fear you are sadly prejudiced in my favor. Now for six more hops.

Two lumps please, hot milk just half a cupful, then quarter coffee and then cream.

Delicious! Yes, I like the coffee made very strong and clear. I loathe the insipid stuff so many make. The Continentals are the coffee makers of the world.

What a pretty, quaint 'old world' room this is. You have the next one also?

No? Well, you are a good little housekeeper. Not a single thing to suggest bedroom. Air fresh, no sign of bed. Ah, yes, I see, box couch and all the toilet things in the dressing-room. You have some lovely old mahogany, my dear; that old chest of drawers with the brass inlay is a gem; and that old table and the chairs,—the book-case too,—

Belonged to your mother's mother? Are over a hundred years old? You love them because of old association, but you don't think them very cheerful.

Oh, ye gods and little fishes, cheerful!

No thanks, no egg, but another cup of coffee. I allow myself two cups always, and a piece of toast. You are flushed and fidgety, what is the matter?

Oh, you want to talk about our plans. Your plans, you mean. All right, fire ahead.

Where do I want to live?

## CHUMS

Well, I want to live here. I find all sorts of possibilities in this attic and with our rooms on the same landing and at the back and facing, we could make things very comfy. But, I confess those stairs stagger me. Still, I knew a man who lived 'way up at the top of an old house in Florence, who was crippled in the same way, and yet he did not seem to be 'phased' by considerably more than four flights, and if one is poor one must live high up to get air and sun. Yes, the more I think of it, the more I do not want to leave. Am glad now I sent over to Mrs. Goggens and had her keep the rooms, although I thought at the time I was a bit wild to do so, but I knew that you and she would see that my trunks were undisturbed, and I could not store them for much less than the rent, so I did it.

You know, from the first I felt that I was not going to die, and all these three months I have been seeing my life in the years to come, making all sorts of plans, to while away the time. My eyes were queer from the shock my system had received and I was not allowed to read much; so those long days of pain, I got through by building castles—queer, little, one-room-in-an-attic castles, but it helped.

I never expected to find a chum, though, ready and waiting for me. Ah, my dear, some day I will tell you how your welcome to me yesterday and your affection and interest have helped me to get over a rather *mauvais quatre heure*.

Now, if you weep into the sugar basin any more, you will spoil the sugar.

Not crying because you're unhappy, but because you're happy?

Bless your heart! you *must* have been a lonely soul, to so welcome a bothersome neighbor. There, there, that's a dear. I feel a little as though I had made a mistake, swallowed one of those tea-balls and it had stuck in my throat. Now, I dislike the feeling. There, that's right, smile,—that is a more understandable effect of joy.

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

Shall we have a cigarette before we clear away?

I declare I think our views are lovely from these windows. Do you know there is a little strip of flat roof, just outside the window in the passage, that we could convert into a little veranda and sit out on, warm evenings, if only the window were a door. The parapet is around the outer edge, so there would be a place to put some pots of plants and it would be beautifully cool. Methinks about June we are going to feel the heat.

Finished your cigarette? Another?

No? I always like two.

You are going to clear away? Do not want any help.

Well, if you insist I will just sit here and chat to you, whilst I finish this last cigarette.

Let me see, where was I—Oh, yes, veranda. I think Mrs. Goggens—nice name that, somehow it just suits one's idea of a lodging-house keeper, kind hearted, inquisitive, given to Rubenesque outlines and no corsets, always a bit doubtful as to back hair and the king's English—yes, decidedly, I think if we agreed to pay for it she would let us have that window cut into a door.

I have about a hundred dollars or so I can spend, before getting down to cases, which means the thirty a month, and I had intended making myself comfy, and incidentally, artistic, at the time I got my silly self run over."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Not bad, Dot. Sounds just as she told it. What a plucky woman she is."

"Yes, she is plucky," answered Dot, pouring the boiling water over the tea leaves and peering into the small, fat tea pot. "And she's a great deal more than merely that,—kind, tender-hearted, lovable thing! It's no wonder everyone cares for her."

"Yes, you are a lot of slaves to her majesty," laughed Neil.

"Well, we like our slavery and when one is lucky



## CHUMS

enough to be liked by Theodosia, one hugs one's chains. Of course we are really anything but slaves. She would not tolerate us a second if we were. But likewise Dosia has, in a superlative degree, what we have in more or less feeble ones and we have the brains to recognize the fact, that's all.

"Do you want *two full* spoons of sugar in your tea?"

"That means, I suppose, that I get them if I acknowledge the superiority of the 'Idol.' All right, she is everything you say, thanks," taking the cup and bending down to kiss her. "And you are justified in your admiration, only I am occasionally glad our Dosia has elected to stay in Europe for awhile, for she sort of absorbs everything in the emotional line."

Dot lifted her eyebrows at him.

"Are you jealous, Neil? I know they say men often are of any admiration or affection shown to anyone beside themselves."

"You've twisted the 'on dit,' honey, it's t'other way about: the husband is looked upon askance if he tries to keep up his bachelor friendships and I don't think I am quite such an egoist as to feel neglected if you have a chum other than myself, but it is not bad, having the affair carried on by letter, you know. I get all the fun of hearing the interesting bits without having to sit up and take notice, if I don't want to."

"Neil, did it ever strike you that we are a very unusual couple?"

"Yes, honey, but I think it's because we have been unfortunate in having known the *miserable* lot. I am certain the good old world's full of happy and congenial couples."

"Are you Neil? Well, I would like to know just *one*. Whom do you know, they must be people I never heard of before."

"Come to think of it, I don't; but puss, that's only because we don't know many people."

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

"Yes, we do. Heaps. And every last one of them is discontented and more or less actively unhappy. We are certainly unusual, Neil."

"Well, thanks be, we are if what you say is the case,—poor devils, what a lot they miss, don't they? How do you account for it, Dot? Most of them start out thinking they are in love hard enough to last through everything Dame Fortune can send them."

Dot looked out to sea, her pretty face serious as she thought awhile, then she said, turning to her husband,—

"I don't know dear, just how well I can put into words what I feel, for it's something more than *think*, but I believe that there is too much idleness for the wives, too much strenuousness for the husbands, and the life in big cities is all against the family and the home. The constant seeing, hearing, being in the atmosphere of wealth breeds the multitude of evils in the lives of the great majority of the ones who do not belong to the very rich. Then luxuries become necessities and health and comfort and happiness are sacrificed. You know Elbert Hubbard is right when he says,"—

——"Shrieks," interpolated Neil.

"Well, shrieks," she amended, "that the greatest good is, health *with* work. And no one who does not know the blessedness of effort can be happy. Do you know, Neil, since we have been out here, the thought has come to me so often to write a truthful little account, giving exact data of our life here. My heart grows heavy when I think of the many who do not *realize* what can be done, given ever so small a capital or income in this land of almost perpetual sunshine—do not, cannot know, situated as they are at home. Here there are no terrible winters, and people can sleep under canvas with comfort and health all the year. Think of what that, in itself, means, compared with the cost of the simplest flats over there and those long, cold months. What lives could be saved that are otherwise doomed.

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Did I tell you that Mrs. V. wants us to rent our tent and shed to a couple of women who have come out from Vermont? School teachers. One has consumption, but it's not a hopeless case, and the other is a chum who has come along to nurse the sick one. It seems that most of the little savings they had have taken unto themselves wings, as savings do under such circumstances, and they have very little left; so they want to economize in every way, and cottage rents are beyond them, besides they want to be in some place that can be sort of homey; Mrs. V. told them how pretty our old tent was, and after seeing it they begged her to ask us if we would rent it."

"Yes, by all means, Dot, let them have it, lend it to them. Bother the rent, if they are so hard up."

She patted his arm affectionately,—

"Well, I do not think that would do, dear, for they are not the kind of people one could 'lend things' to—too proud, and so I think we will say ten dollars a month, which will satisfy their pride and pay for wear and tear, for we are not exactly Cræsus ourselves, you know, and must, I suppose, curb our generosity until—well, until that carnation farm is an accomplished fact."

"Yes, of course you're right, Dot, but when we get on easy street let's put aside half our income every year to help along the good cause. We will put up heaps of little tents and sheds and make them pretty and comfortable and rent them cheap to people who are busted as to pocket-book and lungs, won't we, girlie?"

Dot nodded.

"Yes, my heart goes out to the sick people who are poor, Neil, and it also goes out to the well people who are squandering their health in the big Eastern cities. Nine-tenths of them cannot but be workers, so why not come out to this heaven and work under the conditions that make for good? Queer thing, this gregariousness, don't you think? and that, I suppose, is what it is that will make people herd in cities and suffer everything in the



## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

way of physical and moral ill, when in a great country like this everyone might have breathing space for soul and body."

"It's a big question. Too big for that pretty little head of yours, girlie. Stop frowning over the woes of humanity in general, and get your violin and play to this particular unit, whose back is lame with stooping over slips and planting cuttings and wants to rest awhile."

"All right, lie down flat. That's the best way to rest, and I'll tune up whilst you build castles," she said.

### PART II.

One afternoon Dot ran down the path to the farm and, perching on the top bar of the fence, gave the call they used, "oo-oo-oo." Her husband's tall form straightened up from its stooped position at the farther end of the field and she heard his answering "oo-o-oooo-oo" and beckoned him to come nearer. When he had got half way across she called,—

"Neil, Daisy's got an awful tummy ache, what shall I do?"

"Oh, heavens, I don't know. What makes you think it is tummy?" he asked, coming up to the fence.

"Well, I heard funny noises, and when I went to investigate, she was lying down and acting as a youngster does with colic. Poor dear, she eyed me so pathetically, and I ran to tell you. Come and look at her. Don't they give hot—hot scotches—no, hot smashes—hot mashes or something?"

"I have a vague idea they do, but what constitutes a hot mash?" he asked. "My experience with Jersey cows in the colic has been limited."

After they had looked poor Daisy over, they exchanged glances of dismay and Neil said,—

## CHUMS

"Something's wrong, that's certain. Guess I'd better run along to Welkid's and ask him to come up, the poor thing is shaking all over. Can't you cover her up with something Dot? A flannel blanket, or something?"

"Oh, Neil, remember Betsy Barker's cow, when she tumbled into the lime pit and they put her into flannel waistcoat and flannel drawers? I'll just run in and get that old travelling rug and put it over her." Which she did and sat down near Daisy until Neil and Mr. Welkid returned. His experienced eyes showed him what was wrong and after an hour's treatment, to which poor Daisy meekly submitted, he said,—

"There! the beast will be all right soon. Keep her in her stable yard for a day or two and chuck away her milk for a couple of milkings. Where have you been pasturing her?" Neil pointed to the hillside, and he said,—

"As I go home I'll just look over the ground to see what's there."

"What a quantity of things we don't know. I feel awfully humble, don't you?" said Dot to Neil.

The following day Dot was beaming as Neil came out to the veranda for his tea.

"What's up, Sunshine?" he asked.

"Sit down and be comfy and I'll tell you."

After she had put his tea-cup on the broad arm of his chair and tucked another cushion under his head, she settled down near him and began,—

"Well! the two school teachers who want our tent—are not school teachers. Trust Mrs. V. for getting things mixed. But one of them is that old friend of Martha Holding's, Mary Tobin, who was at the mission house when Martha first went there; and the other, the sick one, is a Mrs. Dorlan who was at one time a singer, lost her voice, then her money, then her health, and now Mary has taken up the case. I never have been so delighted in my life before. We never met Mary Tobin, she had gone to England, you know, when I first met the settlement

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

folk, but I know her as well as though I had lived next door to her all my life, from hearing Martha and others talk of her. And Neil, she's a dear! Just our kind. Clever and strong, kind and practical. She is devoting herself to Mrs. Dorlan, as she evidently does to any work that comes to hand, only in this case there is a tremendous affection felt.

The only part of Mrs. V's story that is correct is, that they have a very tiny income only, and must be careful; and that is the reason they want the tent. The income is entirely Mary's. She did not tell me that, I just sensed it. I do not care so much for the Dorlan person; still, poor thing, she is wofully sick and has had such fiendish knocks from fate, that probably she's excusable for being queer. She has been a great beauty and is very accomplished and all that,—but Mary's a dear."

Neil laughed. "Catch your breath, honey girl, and drink your tea. Incidentally, give your tired man another cup. How did it happen that Miss Tobin brought no letter from Martha?"

"She did, but did not intend to present it until they were all settled here, so that we might not feel under any obligation to put ourselves out in any way. It was quite by accident that all of this came about.

They will move into the tent tomorrow and I promised to sell them milk and vegetables and eggs. I would like to *give* them, but Mary is not the kind of a person one could give anything to. I can quite well fancy her going without, but not accepting favors. All her life she has bestowed; given herself, her time, her strength, her youth to the service of others, and yet she is not a bit the goody kind, Neil, but as jolly and witty and human as can be. I lost my heart to her."

"So I perceive, my dear!" said her husband, looking amusedly at her. "They won't be *too* chummy, will they, Dot? I seem to see with my mind's eye, groups of female figures here on the veranda, all talking, all drink-



## CHUMS

ing tea, and a long shadowy form dimly visible, over by the end, quite crowded into a corner, which bears a striking resemblance to me—and see the form growing less and less, until only the female figures are left in the picture.” As he spoke he leaned forward and peered about.

“No you don’t. You see an admiring group of female figures gathered about that old lounge chair, all paying rapt attention to your opinions on the subject of—oh, any old thing, as far as that goes. Lucky I am not of a jealous temperament, or I should be green! But truly, old boy, I won’t let you be bored. I will fix things so that our blessed time together will not be interfered with much. Anyway, I’d rather be all alone with you than have other people about. Is it not jolly that we never ‘get on’ each other’s nerves? Or get tired of each other?

But Neil, you look as though something were bothering you. What is it, dear?

He glanced at her amusedly.

“What keen eyes the small person has! No, I am not exactly bothered, only perplexed a bit over my lack of experience. I find it is one thing to have theories and quite another to put them into practice, and I am afraid I must serve a sort of apprenticeship to good Mother Nature before I branch out much on my own hook. I have been talking with Welkid and he thinks that I would best go slow about putting out any more money or labor on the carnation plan for this year, and devote myself to garden truck.”

“Oh—oh—poor dear!” said Dot. “And you had so set your heart on the other.”

“Never mind, honey, if I can grow good truck and sell it, that’s pretty good; and after I’ve more experience and a little money put by, the other will come; I find that it does need those two indispensables; but Welkid says he will take all the truck I can raise, at a fair price, and send it in to the city. It’s not as pretty as raising flowers, is it?” making a wry face. “But it will mean ready

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

money, just as fast as I can get things to the picking stage. So it's to be early pease and fine asparagus and even the plebeian squash and the other poor relations of the vegetable family."

"You don't feel too despondent, do you Neil?"

"Well, not to the point of despair," he answered, smiling. "And after all, dearie, the fact that we have this ducky little place all paid for is great!"

"Yes, Neil, and you are well and getting stronger every day, with no fear of being without the necessities to bother us, and the free, open-air work. Surely even raising garden truck is better than being in a stuffy office for eight hours a day, isn't it Neil?"

"Rather! and we will stick to our plan of being workers, not slaves. The mistake that so many make is that they are too anxious to make enough money to be done with the thing and go back to what they call civilization, but we intend to live our lives here and get the blessing of the labor and its fruit, as we go along.

There's a ripping book in that last packet that Dick sent. Feel like reading to me, honey? I am in a particularly receptive mood."

"Which means that you are just plain lazy," laughed Dot.

So the big man stretched out on the long cane chair and she read to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mary Tobin moved into the tent which, during the several months since the young couple left it, had been empty. The vines had grown well and the small dining-room kitchen was a bower. Dot had taken great delight in arranging things so that they should find the place cheerful and comfortable, and had robbed her own place of many rustic baskets and pots of plants to that end.

When Mary Tobin came up for the milk, the evening of the day they moved in, she looked radiant.

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"Mrs. Amerton, we're no end obliged to you, and my friend wants me to thank you, for her, for your thoughtfulness and kindness. We're all settled and shall look for you for tea, tomorrow. Have a bunch of letters from Theo and the others to read to you, and no end of things I want to talk to you of, and no end of questions I want to ask."

"That will be jolly, my husband has to go to town tomorrow, so that will leave me free. Ordinarily, I do not go out at tea-time, for that is our breathing spell and time to be together.

How is your friend, Miss Tobin?"

Mary's face lost some of its radiance, as she answered,—

"No worse, but no better; I am hoping all things from this life here, but I think it is at least half mental. She is in a state of despondency and that is the hardest thing to deal with; she cannot seem to adjust herself to the new conditions of her life, cannot seem to feel that there is anything worth making the effort to live for. If something were to rouse her from the apathetic condition, I should say that she had a chance to get well." With a sigh, Mary took up the pail of milk and looking into Dot's sympathetic face; said,—

"I am hoping you will do her a lot of good. I am such an old story that I have lost my power over her, so don't fail to come, will you?"

The following day, when everything at home was in order, Dot put on a fresh shirt-waist and, carrying a big bunch of flowers, took her way across the field and down to the fence. She found the invalid lying in the hammock and Mary tacking up some sketches, when she arrived, and they made her welcome.

"It's a trifle before tea-time, but I am so thirsty I shall be grateful if you will forget that twenty-odd minutes, Miss Tobin, and give me my tea," she said, after they had accomplished the "getting acquainted"; and while



## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

Mary bustled about she told them of her experiences with tent life in the same quarters, a few months previous, and of how much the air and life had done for her husband, of their deciding to take the hill place, of their tearing down the old house and building the present one from its timbers and sun-and-wind-mellowed boards.

"One cannot beat nature, can one, when it comes to color? Why, some of the tints on our house are the loveliest things! I am trying to coax all of the vines and runners to go decorously over windows, doors and verandas only, and leave those beautiful boards free. They are too beautiful to be covered," she said. "Oh, this is such a wonderful land! I can never get over my joy in it and my thanksgiving for it. When I look at my big fellow and see how he has been given his health and strength by it, I feel like proclaiming to the world the glad tidings that all those weary and heavy laden ones, whose lives are given over to one long struggle for existence in a city, might know what possibilities this land holds forth."

"But, Mrs. Amerton, surely you do not intend to remain here, after your husband's health is quite restored, do you?" inquired Mrs. Dorlan.

Dot was silent for a moment, looking out over the waters, then she answered,—

"Yes, we intend to make this our home. Always my husband has longed for out-of-door work and simplicity of life. The complexities and struggles of the life in cities has been his horror, but he settled down to it for my sake and stuck to it until it became an imperative necessity to give it up."

"But the isolation of such a life for people of your intellectuality—now if it was in Los Angeles, that would be different."

Dot laughed. "Yes, it would. But can you tell me how people are to be truck farmers in Los Angeles? We must earn our living, it must be out-of-door work and I do not know of any way to combine the two in a large

## CHUMS

city. And then, when all is said, it is the very freedom of our life here, the possibility of wearing old clothes, living close to nature and, in fact, being able to live our lives instead of being coerced into living the general life, by being neighbored, that appeals. Why do you know that we can slip our rain coats over our bathing suits and run down for a dip in the ocean, mornings, and we can at all times feel eminently self-respecting in clothes that would create a scandal, should we wear them in a city. Then, as for being isolated, surely with electric cars almost at your door, which take you to the city in half or three-quarters of an hour, you cannot call it being isolated, exactly. And oh, the peace of it."

"Well I, for one, should like nothing better," said Mary, filling Dot's cup—"if I did not have that driven feeling, I think I was marked with the curse of what is called the missionary spirit. Theodosia is not quite so polite, she tells me it is simply my desire to 'boss the job' and that, as I am not allowed to do much of that in my own set, I go down to the slums where the poor wretches are helpless, and that I take an unfair advantage."

This sounded so like Dosia that they all laughed.

"When did you see her, Miss Tobin?" Dot inquired.

"Last October, in Paris. She is still with the 'chums' and they really do live a delightful life. Theo is getting as gray as the proverbial badger and fuller of vitality and energy every year. I am going to put her in a book some day, only the trouble will be that people who do not know her will think I have created the character out of whole cloth. But it is the old proposition, 'truth is stranger than fiction.'"

And so they talked on until the clock struck the half-hour and Dot rose to go.

"Will you both, some day when Mrs. Dorlan feels equal to the climb, come up and see us? I want to show you my big husband and my small house and prove to

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

you how much can be done here in this land of sunshine, in a few months only."

Dot arrived at the gate as her husband came in sight down the hill, and waited for him.

"Well, my butter-ball, how goes it?" he asked, kissing her.

"The reason why, I cannot tell, etc.," she answered, "Neil, I cannot take to the 'Dorlan,' but Mary's a dear and I have had a jolly little visit. I'll tell you all about it at supper. I must rush a bit now, for I stayed longer than I intended and I have to make some biscuits for you. I suppose you're hungry?"

"Could eat an old boot," he answered. "Want me to help?"

"Yes, you can make the salad and skim the cream, that's a dear! the table is set and I will have supper ready in half an hour."

\* \* \* \* \*

It was one afternoon a year later and Mary Tobin was having tea with Dot. They were alone, as Mrs. Dorlan had gone to the city on shopping bent and Neil was putting up an extra crate of selected vegetables for the hotel.

Mary moved about restlessly, and Dot said,—

"What's wrong, Mary?"

The big woman shrugged her shoulders,—

"Spring fever. Now that Ella is getting well and does not need me as she did I find myself longing for my old work. I've had too long a rest, but it has been a lovely time and I have a whole note-book full of data for the unbelievers who doubt the possibility of living on forty dollars a month, and when I go back I shall preach the Land of Sunshine to the multitudes."

"What will Mrs. Dorlan do after she leaves here?" enquired Dot.

Mary laughed grimly. "Well, one thing that she won't



## CHUMS

do is that very thing. She hates all this, you know, and only gives a very grudging acknowledgment of its blessings. Says that she would rather live in a fifth floor back and cook over the gas than live here in the most beautiful spot and have all of the comforts and most of the luxuries. She is not ready yet, my dear, for peace."

"No," assented Dot, "I think I have never known anyone so unready."

"You have not grown to care for her, have you?" enquired Mary.

"Not exactly," said Dot. "She is not an affinity. Still there is much good in Ella, only she belongs to the ones who have to be disciplined hard before they learn their lesson."

I am glad that her small legacy came to her now for it will give her a chance to get quite well before she has to take up work, and will provide the necessities after, so that she need not slave. I fear that her voice will never again be what it was, and her pride is so great that rather than be one of the great class of ordinary singers, she will teach. She is very beautiful, Mary, and still young. Probably her life will be a fortunate one after all."

"You mean that she may marry again, and all that? No, I think not. The experience that left her what you know her was too bitter. She would rather be free to live her own life. I doubt greatly if any amount of wealth, even though she does love luxury, would tempt her to marry. Some day I will tell you her story and you will, I think, judge her less hardly."

I had a letter from Martha Holding today, that made me very anxious to get back, so I think another month will see me in New York at the old work, and did I tell you that Miss Allmish is going with me?"

"No, really? How did it come about?"

"From listening to my tales of the people and the work to be done amongst them, I fancy."

"Well, I *am* glad. It's the right thing, I think, and

## A CROSS SECTION OF LIFE

what she needs. This sitting down with folded hands to mourn over the sorrows life has brought is a poor way to get over the sting of the griefs."

"You're perfectly happy, Dot, aren't you?"

"Absolutely, Mary. I sometimes am frightened, fearful to admit how happy, 'lest the gods may hear.' We have successfully settled the question of living; we are perfectly reconciled to the simplicity of our life, love its work, joy in its pleasures, and are absolutely free from any ambition to do what is called 'make money' if to do it means giving up our precious hours to grubbing year in, year out, until we lose the power to enjoy it when it comes, as so many do.

Mother and the girls mourn over my case in a most amusing manner—appear to think me an abject slave and to be referred to as 'poor Dot.' Funny, is it not?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Once more the tent was vacant. Mary had gone back to her beloved slums.

Mrs. Dorlan had taken up her abode in Riverside and Dot and Neil had come over to take away the few things that belonged at the house, and sat looking out at the sunset.

"Shall we take down the tent, honey," he asked, "or leave it on the chance that some other or others will want to 'home' in it awhile?"

"Oh, leave it, Neil. It's so pretty now, all overgrown with creepers, and has a little story of its own and we shall have the fun of seeing some chapters added, I feel sure."

He laughed and put his arm about the small figure at his side,—“A very mild little story, Dot. Not a bit of tragedy or even melodrama.”

“Neil, I am so self reproachful,” looking up at him—  
“Yesterday Mary told me Mrs. Dorlan's story and I could weep when I think that I did not know it all before—

## CHUMS

talk of tragedy and melodrama! Why, that is just what her whole life has been, and I, small fool thing that I am! thought her cold and selfish and given up to unnecessary grieving.

I have learned a lesson. I never, never again will sit in judgment on anyone or anything."

Neil's arm held her closely and they stood looking off across the waters until the last golden flame died out of the sky. Then, in the fading light, they walked up the hill to the house.



## Family Gods



NNAD ELOC TO KATHERINE MEDWAY,  
TOWANDA, P. A.

DEAR OLD GIRL,—

Yes, I know I quite deserve all of the bullying your last letter contained, but when you hear the news you will forgive me.

Tanta Sophia passed out just a month ago, as we wired you, as tranquilly as she had lived, and I think her only regret was that all of the old things she loved could not go with her, for I saw here eyes roam from one old piece of mahogany to another and there was a positive pain of renunciation in them, so much so that I took it upon myself to say,—

“Dear Tanta, Phil and I will never let a single thing go out of our hands and we will keep them beautifully, in memory of you.”

She gave a peaceful little smile and dropped into a sleep that had no awakening.

We buried her in the old corner lot that holds so many of us Van Ordens, and Phil and I came quietly back to the dear old house which, with its contents, is all that we have in the world.

Old Mr. Vortman read the will to us in the library and I shall always remember the picture the vines made across the window, with all of the new spring greenery making dancing lights on the floor.

He knew that Tanta's income died with her and that as we had been so great an expense to the dear soul she could never save much out of it; and he, of course, knew that we were a penniless brood, so, in his kindly way he talked with and questioned us, and we, Phil and I, fairiy

## CHUMS

falling over our tongues, unbosomed to him our hopes and plans.

He was very kind and did not put a single spoke in our wheels, except once, and that was to dissuade us from selling the dear old place, which we had thought we must do; and told us that it could only be done at such a sacrifice of dollars and feelings that he thought we would better lease it and the forty acres for a term of years, keeping the home to come to in the years ahead when we would want it. As he so dearly put it,—

“My dears, take an old man’s advice and keep the home where six generations of your people have lived. There are certain things that no amount of money can buy, and the atmosphere of an old house that has been home to so many of one’s people is one of those things.”

So it was decided we should go to New York, as we so longed to do, Phil for her chance at newspaper illustrating, I for the illuminating; we decided to take enough of the precious things to make a tiny flat home-like and pretty, and the other dear old things are to be put into the old “cobblestone wing” with dear Debby to care for them, until, some day when Phil and I have made our reputations and fortunes, we shall once more put things in their old places and be *chez nous*.

All of which being done, we are literally in our new abode. About it all I will tell you in my next letter, but do you sit you down and write me about everybody and everything.

Am burning up with curiosity to know what Maxine has decided to do, now she is graduated, and of Tillie and of Paul.

Do not, under penalty of a beating, leave out a scrap of news.

Yours as ever,

ANNAD.

## FAMILY GODS

TOWANDA, P. A., April 26, 189—

KATHERINE MEDWAY TO ANNAD ELOC.

MY DEAR NAD,—

Had just finished the baking when your most welcome scrawl arrived, and crimson and befloured I sat me down on the seat under the willow by the back door and read it. Oh, you lucky, lucky girl!

Poor old Tanta, I felt awfully sorry for her to have to die and leave all those treasures. That would almost keep me in the body in spite of years, I think, if they were mine, and I could just see the look on her face when you assured her you would keep them together, for I know from something she had said last year when I was there, that she feared you girls might feel that you must sell them as you had no money and she knew you longed for a larger life and for Europe.

So as I read, I pictured the room, that great low-ceiled room, with its big cheval, with its carved garlands and fat cherries, the big four-post bed with its steps, all of the ducky little tables with the many drawers, the big, carved wardrobe, where we youngsters used to hide, the wall with the paper your grandfather brought over from Holland, that funny ridgy, thick paper, with the Chinese pagodas and bridges and impossibly beautiful Chinese women, and the great, deep west window as big as most people's rooms, with Tanta's desk and work-case and huge davenport. And other pictures of other rooms came to me, all filled to overflowing with lovely old things that many generations of your nomad ancestors, with a passion for collecting, had filled and filled to overflowing, —and then that great gray, old stone house.

And I found myself going back to the days when our brood and your brood used to overrun the place, with gentle Tanta always ready to tell us tales of the days when the Van Ordens and the Elocs were a rich and great family; when she, dear Tanta, was a great beauty and a belle and was sent to Europe to complete her edu-



## CHUMS

cation, as were all of the youngsters of the family, as a matter of course.

I can remember as well as though it had been yesterday, one rainy day when we brats the entire eleven of us gathered in the sitting-room around Tanta and begged stories, and more stories, and how the dear old soul 'reminisced' and took us back to the gay days of the Second Empire, the balls and fêtes, the coaching parties and all of the frivol and delight of the time. How the pink color came to her cheeks and how straight she sat in the big carved chair, with those dear old tiny hands, with their old rings, waving and motioning as she talked.

Do you remember how we used to say if anything happened to Tanta's hands, she would straightway lose the power of speech, they were so necessary to her in expressing?

Ah, Nad dear, those were precious times, those vacations in the old house, and I simply wept for joy when I read that you were not going to sell the place. Sell it! Why, if it were mine I would work myself to a shadow rather than lose it. I always said that in my last incarnation I was a Van Orden, I love with such fervor the family traditions and possessions, and for some sin of omission, probably that of lack of appreciation of it, *that* time, I was born *this* time the oldest child of a poor minister of absolutely unyielding Puritanic ideas, who would not know what I meant should I by chance forget myself so far as to talk to him honestly of my desires, but who would feel me to be worldly minded to the degree requiring to be wrestled with in prayer.

Heavens! I have written so long now I have no time to answer your questions in this, but will write again in a few days. But, oh I say! what "a small piecie brute" you were to stop your letter where you did. Write me instanter and tell me every living thing! Don't you leave out so much as a salt-cellar.

Lovingly,

KATHIE.

## FAMILY GODS

I forgot to tell you—Maxine is offered a position as teacher of elocution and languages at Madame W's, so there is talk of her being in New York by September.

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MAY 1ST, NEW YORK.

ANNAD TO KATHERINE.

Before I start in upon an account of our move and settling I want to say how we "joyed" in the news of Max's coming to New York. And tell her not to think of going anywhere else, she must come to us, and when I explain to you how nicely we can manage it all, you will join with us in persuading her. Phil just looked over my shoulder and remarked,—

"Persuade! indeed if she does not go down on her knees and beg to be taken in, she can go and live in a ten by six hall bedroom and 'be miserable to her',"—which she says I am to let her know.

Now for the tale of our move. I know your perfectly fiendish joy in detail, so I won't, as you say,—“leave out a salt-cellar.”

“Well, after we had decided, we put the house in the hands of an agent and whilst waiting for the new tenant we worked. Worked, did I say! no, toiled, like galley slaves, refusing any help from the girls, just depending on Debby who, by the way, is a perfect piece of human wreckage owing to her emotions at losing us and the breaking up of the old home she had worked in so faithfully for forty years.

We first selected what we wanted to take to furnish the new quarters and Phil nearly beat me, she got so enraged over it. Really it did seem that we wanted to take it all, and we got into such a muddle and our nerves so “stringy” as Debby said, that one afternoon when we had “see-sawed” over that old rosewood chiffonier, with all the drawers and cubby-holes, first to take it, then not to, as it is such a huge thing, we both declared we would just give up the plan and stay home where we could

## CHUMS

have everything about us, and Debby, who always assisted at the decisions with an anguished expression, was drying her eyes and looking happy, when Mr. Vortman came in with the mail. Amongst it was a letter from the agent, saying that he had a prospective client and would bring him out the following day.

Then we told Mr. Vortman and he laughed a little at us in his dear old tender way, talked to us very reasonably for awhile and finally suggested, as a way of settling the furniture question, that we go to New York and find our flat, then write out a list of the things we needed and he would aid Debby in packing and sending, and would see that all of the other things were put in the cobble wing where Debby is to live and where the dear old thing can fuss over them to her heart's content, until that happy time when we all flock back.

So after meeting our new tenant the following day and arranging a lease of five years, we, Phil and I, pretty weepily said good bye and left for New York, with our trunks and dressing bags.

You know the funny form unhappiness takes with Phil, how absolutely dumb she gets. Well, for the whole day from eight in the morning until ten-thirty at night she just sat and glared out of the window and I let her alone, for to tell the truth I was feeling a good bit miserable myself, in spite of a queer little excitement and anticipation, which I rather hated to encourage, it seemed so heartless.

We were both very glad to get to our beds, which we did about eleven-thirty, and where do you think? Why at the nice old Murray Hill, just near the depot, where Daddy always took us when he gave us a week in town, and the fact that old Anthony knew us and looked after us, gave us a sort of comfy feeling so that after we had tubbed and were having what Debby calls a "snack," Phil got over her dumbness a bit and we planned to be up early and go house-hunting.



## FAMILY GODS

We awakened at just eleven o'clock and heaven only knows if we should have awakened then, if the housemaid had not knocked, and the way we jumped into our clothes was a caution, so that by twelve o'clock we were ready for breakfast-lunch, which we had in our rooms, so as not to lose any more time.

We took a cab and went to the first of the eight addresses we had. No success, altogether too fashionable and overpowering, with its inlaid marble and brass and "portier," so we did not even go up. Second, worse, if anything. Third, same. Fourth, same. Fifth—Sixth—when we commenced to look at each other aghast. Finally, after driving seemingly for miles, cabby opened the trap and said,—

"Sure Miss, I think it's in there,"—pointing to what looked like an embowered and idealized alley, which had a chain across it, so that no wagons could get in.

He drew up to the curb and we got out on a modest old street filled with real old houses, and crossing the pavement we went past the chain into the little street, only about twenty-five feet wide, I think, lined on both sides with red brick houses, two-stories-and-an-attic, with old iron balconies, flower boxes, trees and a generally clean and old-world look, like pictures I have seen of German towns, every stone and brick looking as though it had been scrubbed.

We were so delighted we pinched each other to see if it were not a dream, as we stood on the very white stone steps of No. 10's front stoop.

I know, now, what stoops are and why. Inlaid in the front door, which was painted an olive green and had a real brass knob, was a little circular window with a white scrim curtain, trimmed with white crocheted lace, of an immaculateness no words can describe, and partly drawn aside so that visitors could be inspected before the door was opened.

I am sure that our expression of mingled rapture and

## CHUMS

surprise was understood and taken to mean what it was, —appreciation of the beautiful freshness and charm of it all,—for the door opened wide and Frau Slöter stood before us.

I could have hugged her on the spot and I know that Phil was absently hunting her sketch-book. Imagine a woman of fifty-odd, medium height, very stout, very blonde, with a high color, and dressed in a short woolen skirt, a blue-and-white striped loose jacket, a big white apron, white kerchief around her neck, a cap of white net on her thick, kinky, whitey-blond hair, and the biggest, jolliest mouth ever the Lord gave to a human being.

I finally realized that no one was saying anything, so I explained our errand, told her we had gone to six other places, were tired and discouraged and had begun to think that our desire for a home would have to be accommodated to the modern apartment house, which we did not want and could not afford, until we had found at long last this oasis in the desert, and then I forget what I said,—Phil swears I flung myself on the Frau's neck and wept.

At any rate a half-hour later we were installed in the Frau's kitchen, which opened into a dear back yard, planted in the most approved Dutch fashion, not an inch wasted, with two heavenly linden trees in all their spring green, little beds of lettuce and radishes and onions, and sweet peas, nasturtiums and vines of all sorts all over the walls, or will be soon. We were drinking coffee, eating such coffee-cake as dreams are made of, telling Frau S. all about everything from our birth on, and for the first time in weeks, happy.

Heavens! what a manuscript of a letter. I will tell you the rest of it next time, simply must close it now, for I am to have a lesson in German from Franz, Frau's second son, and as he is so good I do not want to keep him waiting.

Will write in a few days. Phil and I are both well and

## FAMILY GODS

she went to the *Leader's* office this morning, but if it is possible she wants to have the work home, as I do. Then we can truly live a studio life.

Love to you all.

“NAD.”

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MAY 5TH, —

KATHERINE TO ANNAD.

Now you need not for one minute, Annad Atier Eloc, think that your letter is quickly answered because I love you,—could you see into my heart and see how it seethes with sheer mad! No, but all fun aside, that was absolutely brutal of you to stop your letter where you did, after I had worked myself up to a pitch of excitement that prevented my bringing my cherries to a jell. Then to find that the letter closed without a word of the rooms and the arrangement, and what you pay and how you live! Truly, words fail me. When the girls came home and hunted me up in the pantry, struggling with my spoiled jelly, I just handed the letter to Max, and Tillie and the “brats” perched up on the sugar and flour barrels whilst she read it and I felt myself a cool, composed, unexcitable person when I compared myself to them as they reached the sentence, “I really must close it now, for”—. Max looked blankly at me, the girls jumped down and ran to see if it really was the end—and then they said things, and you know what it is like when they are all taken that way at once.

I simply had to sit down on the big cruller box, I was so weak from laughter. They are now out in the orchard, writing to you collectively, and I will just tell you right here and now I have grave suspicions of this Franz's motives. German lessons indeed! Why, you've read German for years. He is undoubtedly a sly German and has learned that your mother was a Van Orden and that Uncle Theodore is a multi-millionaire, and thinks that it



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would be a good family to marry into. I shall write to Phil and see what *she* thinks. You are such a child.

Well, I did think that I would pay you back in your own coin, but as Dithie says, "Really, you know the best people do not do that."

I will tell you our news, for I feel certain that the girls will be so interested in being scathingly ironical and openly jeering, that they will either leave it out or skimp the telling. We have sold the farm: that is, all but the ten-acre meadow lot, the birch wood and the six acres directly around the house, and to Mr. Farrington, the rich man who is buying up all of the country he can get his hands on in order to make the tract of land and that huge barrack of a place he has built more like an "English Estate."

And now we have the nest egg that I promised the girls, if we ever had it, should give them a chance to go to New York. So, my dear, in September you will see us all there.

Of course silly, sentimental "Kathie" is finding it hard, but we shall do what you girls have done, keep the old home for a nest to fly to in times of stress or hunger for the "really wilds."

Ah, Nad, I can hardly believe it when I look in the glass, that I seem yet young, for these years since Father's passing, filled as they have been with the responsibility of bringing up these five girls, of being father, mother, everything; of making small, you know how small, means give them the education, the instruction that was, I recognized, a necessity for the talented dear things, to tone down Max, buoy up Tillie, comfort sensitive Paul, keep the brats, bless 'em, in proper subjection and incidentally in "entire articles of clothing."

Ah, but, me dear, it has been a bit of a fight—many's the time. And now that they are about ready to take up work for themselves and need a wide field, this is very opportune, this chance to sell the place. Why, we might

## FAMILY GODS

have waited until we were gray for any of the farmers in the neighborhood to buy it, so if Mr. F. never does another thing in his life, he has done much in giving five—no six,—I count still as a girl, don't I?—the opportunity to carry out their heart's desires, although he has done it unconsciously, as I doubt if the good man knows us by sight.

It will be, I think, about the twentieth of August that we shall leave, as Max must be there for the opening of school in September, and we shall write to you next time about the things we want you to do for us, you old New Yorkers.

Love to you,

KATHIE.

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MAY 11TH,—

DEAREST KATHIE MINE,—

Forgive me this once, and I promise never, never again to do it, or not to do it, as it was a sin of omission, was it not? And to prove my contrition and in deference to your known liking for sequence, I will commence as nearly as possible where I broke off the offending letter, although, these eleven days, such heaps of things have happened.

Let me see,—I think we were having coffee in the Frau's kitchen, and by-the-by I must describe that kitchen before I go any farther.

It is about two feet below the level of the garden, and is bricked with red bricks, which, my dear, get *reddened weekly*. It has an old fashioned fireplace, part open grate, part shut up, and covered over with all kinds of ovens and resting places of iron, and the back is filled in with tiles—altogether the fetchinigest thing I ever saw, and it is an exact replica of the one in the Frau's old home. The various hooks, pot-chains, and bellows, shovel, tongs, poker and scuttle are the same, all wrought

## CHUMS

brass and copper and belonged to her great grandmother. Truly my mouth waters every time I see them.

The long table is on a sort of trestle, massive and carved at the ends, and is of oak, but so old that it is nearly black. There are two big dressers, also oak, black, carved, with an array of old plates, platters, cups and saucers, bowls and jugs that Phil simply sits in front of in unashamed worship. Truly, I think the youngest of them is a gray cracked bowl that has funny blue-green designs on it and that Frau says was a part of her mother's outfit.

There is a funny table with a kneading-board and sort of trough attached, and there are old brass and copper pots, pans and bowls all about.

Two windows and a door look into the back yard, which is two steps up. At the windows there are curtains with ball fringe and knitted lace, held back with a knitted cord. There are wide window ledges and pots of flowers, and my dear, my dear, there are windows that open in—small casement ones. Is that not a picture for you? Scattered about are a lot of squatty, carved oak chairs with cushions of patchwork, and as it is used for dining-room as well as kitchen, there are strips of rag carpet about and everything is spick, span and shining as though it was "Exhibit A, old-time room in a Dutch farm house," in a museum.

The front of the basement, where most people would have put their living-room, is used for wood and coal and wash-house, because it was the back that had the garden, and so must have "the room."

Well, to get back to our coffee. Before we had that we followed Frau up three flights of stairs, through two shining spotless oilclothed halls to the attic!

Oh, my dear, my dear, to think that our good luck, or the fates, or whatever it is, should have sent us there!

Imagine four low-ceiled, dormer-windowed rooms, opening into a wide hall with a long skylight and a



## FAMILY GODS

chimney!—which can, at comparatively small expense, be opened, bricked and grated,—two dormer windows opening on to a projection of the story below, which forms a balcony, and remember that the stairs are enclosed.

Can't you just see what a duck of a studio and living-room that hall will make? Off from it, the four rooms open simply, one after the other. In the back one is a sink, shut in, and in each are big closets.

The middle room is to be bath and dressing-room, with running water piped from kitchen. Back of a rose chintz curtain is our "next to Godliness" outfit. Then the other two rooms will be our bedroom-dens, the places where we can go and turn the key when we do not wish to be sociable.

As to the arrangement of the rooms and furnishing, that I will leave until next letter, for I must chat a bit with you over all of the news in yours and the girls' letters.

Of course, if you all come to New York that simply means Paradise for Phil and me; and if you do, can you not take a house and board our kids for us? We want them awfully, and can't have them here with us, but if you are all to be here that settles the matter, does it not? And if it does, I know the house, and it's only two doors away, and will be vacant in August. Very similar in arrangement to this: four big rooms and a hall on each floor, two stories and an attic, and a love of a garden with five beautiful trees in it,—I never thought that I should be saying "a house with five trees in its back yard," we have been so used to "woods with a house." But after you have been about New York as much as I have in the last few weeks, you will come to feel a distinct glow of pride in your five trees.

Yes, truly, Kathie, you are in luck to be able to find a purchaser for the farm, and now you can all carry out the plans you have made so often. In fact, we all can do

## CHUMS

a bit of carrying out, and, best of all, we shall be together.

I went past Madame W——'s where Max goes in September: it was very inspiringly prosperous, and I saw several exceedingly smart looking maids waiting to escort their "young ladies" home, and of course everyone knows that it is the very "swaggerest" finishing school here, so Max ought to get a good salary.

You have not said a word about Tillie. Are you worrying about the pretty thing, Kathie? Don't, dear. Beauty such as hers is a great blessing, believe me, and the little airs and graces and discontents will work out, for the dear thing is so lovable and truly good under it all.

Paul is, as you once said, not nineteen, but ninety-nine. The force and steadiness that girl shows is remarkable, and she loves responsibility so,—do let her have more of it. You have been the head so long that it is all second nature and you forget the girls are grown up and, even adoring you as they do, must sometimes fret against the tight rein you draw.

If you don't tell on me, I will sometime show you a letter the "brats" sent me last week. I laugh every time I think of it, but I would not for worlds have them think me "leaky" as they so cheekily put it.

Phil is sending you a line and wants me to enclose it.

Love to all,

"NAD."

P. S. What on earth do you mean by such a suggestion about Frau's son Franz—why, he is just a mechanic, a metal worker, artistic, yes! and extremely well up in his line, but a workman pure and simple, although better educated and far better read than most so-called gentlemen. He has been so good about helping me with the German and he speaks such a beautiful German himself, and is so deferential, so very respectful, that I am cer-

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tain that no such thought for a moment would enter his handsome head. N.

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MAY 17TH, —

NAD DEAR,—

Your letter arrived this minute, and although I am literally up to my eyes in work, I shall just drop everything and answer it.

First as to your youngsters joining *my* youngsters in the housekeeping plan: yes, it is a capital idea and the girls were wild with joy when I read it to them. So we can consider that settled and later on arrange as to details, house, move, expense and so on.

What you wrote about Paul and that little sentence “you forget that the girls are grown up,” etc., has given me cause for thought, likewise a heartache. The heartache I shall presently rip to tatters and find out how much is hurt vanity and pride, and how much plain ache, but have not the time just now.

Yes, Paul is ready for responsibility, the dear strong, kind, capable thing, and I will try to let her take some. And really Nad, now that you have opened my eyes a bit, I see that I have been selfish and a good deal of a petty tyrant,—in a nice sort of way—and have tried to keep the whole brood under a metaphorical coop, as I do biddy and her chicks long after those chicks are too big to get in comfortably under the slats. But, oh, I have tried so hard to do everything for them that mother and father would have done, and in doing it have forgotten that the years have slipped away and the little things are big things. So when we arrive in New York I will loosen the rein and let each do her share.

I am most curious to know what those brats have written you. I have known for some time that they were repenting something in sack-cloth and ashes, but I never force their confidences. Their repentance always, as you remember, takes the form of wanting to do the things



## CHUMS

they most dislike doing ordinarily. So the zeal with which they have washed dishes, cleaned silver, practised, and turned and hemmed some sheets that have waited in the linen room for months for the doing, of course quickly told me something was up, and then they have taken to telling me I look just *lovely*, and what beautiful hair I have, and so on—I suppose soon I shall hear all about it from them.

Yes, it does seem as though Max had found a very good opening and the hours are good, with *no* home work, so that really she will have as much freedom and time to herself as is good for her. You know how I believe in plenty of work. I do *not* say that work that one loves is not a deal sight jollier than work that one dislikes, but I do believe in work. The salary is good, although not remarkable.

I confess I do bother a bit about Tillie, she is so extraordinarily good to look at. Why, last week when I took her to town to do some shopping, “everything in trousers” from the ragged newsboy to the lordly being who ushers you in at W’s stared at her as though she was something in the way of a sight, and I distinctly do *not* like her manner of receiving all this, but I feel helpless and oh, won’t I be glad to have the child safely married! I tell you, Nad, I am afraid of the responsibility. Lovely as the child is, and gentle and soft apparently, there is a whole lot of sheer mulish obstinacy and selfishness that I have struggled with and against ever since she was a beautiful baby: and I will tell you, Nad, although I have never admitted it to anyone else, every time, even in those days, she downed me, simply wore me out. And if ever there was a re-embodied spirit it is there; I am certain that that beautiful great-aunt of mother’s, for whom she is named and whom three generations have whispered about and over, is looking at me from those wonderful hazel eyes.

You know how marvelously like the miniature she is,

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even to that queer curl that grows so low on the right temple. And you likewise know what a devil of selfishness and iniquity "La belle Tante" was, that same beautiful Hortillia Van Orden, so do you wonder I fear?

We are, as you can imagine, having great powwows over our possessions and with no Debby to help us—but *likewise* no such wealth of heavenly treasures as you had to debate over. With us, it is principally that everything is mostly too old and too shabby to take. Our only treasures are the books and pictures.

Oh, I want to tell you whilst I think of it, we had a call from Mr. Farrington, the purchaser of the farm, the very day I sent that last letter, and he is as different in every way from what we had thought him as it is possible to be. The girls took a great fancy to him. They simply took possession of him on his second call and insisted upon showing him all of our favorite nooks and begged him not to cut down any trees, or dam up the creek as they had heard he was going to do. All of which he seemed to find highly amusing and when they finally brought him home to tea and he seemed to want to stay, I made him as comfortable as possible.

He is, I think, a very lonely man and his eyes have the look of a hungry dog who has been beaten and abused. There is some story back of it all, I feel certain. But I likewise feel certain there is nothing discreditable to him in it. I would stake anything I had on that.

After tea we, he and I, strolled down to the alders and sat on the old log awhile; the moon was just rising and you know what an exquisite place it is in the moonlight.

He seemed very interested in hearing about father, and when he came the next day, and in fact each day, he has been taken up with the books, which he says are mostly very fine editions. He tells us to keep them carefully; but, if at any time we should decide to sell them, to give him the opportunity to buy them. Sell our pre-

## CHUMS

ious books that have come down to us many of them from grandfather—we would all of us rather go out as “scrub-ladies”!

I fancy I must have expressed myself rather strongly, for he dropped the subject.

We all went over to tea with him on Thursday; oh, my dear, my dear, my fingers fairly itched to re-arrange things. The place has great possibilities and is like a museum, filled with treasures, which seem to be really fine, but, from something Mr. F. said, evidently he knows only about books and that is a passion with him.

He loves everything that is artistic and interesting and I have got the fancy that this huge fortune he is accredited with having is new to him and he has just bought “everything in sight” as the brats would say. He has been starved, my dear, *just starved* for life’s pleasant things, affection and companionship included. Some day he will tell me all about it. I think several times he has been quite near to it.

The house is, as you remember, a mammoth ugly place, but so wonderfully situated that with some taste and plenty of money it could be made lovely—now it is a great, bare, lonely-looking place.

I forgot that he was almost a stranger, in fact, we all did and in our characteristic way we, individually and collectively, rearranged things to please ourselves.

I changed the interior, Max threw out balconies and added turrets, Tillia landscape-gardened, Paul conservatoried, grape-housed and kitchen-gardened, the twins built gymnasiums and a swimming-tank, tennis courts and golf links, and we enjoyed ourselves most thoroughly, as usual, until the dear man must have thought us a lot of bedlamites. But he only beamed and looked warm and comfy, and when the brats said,—

“Is it not too hateful, Mr. Farrington, that just now when you need us so much, we have to leave?” he roared, and answered,—



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“New York is not far off and I shall expect you *all* to come often and help me carry out some of these plans.”

The place is overrun with city servants who are not, I think, good—another thing I nearly had to bite my tongue in two to keep from speaking of—but I felt that there must be a limit to criticism. When we know him better, I shall give him a hint or two.

I had quite a queer feeling as we stood on the terrace waiting a moment to see the moon rise over old “Thatch Top,” before going home, as though I was leaving something that belonged to me; now did you ever hear of such a silly thing?

All this packing up, this breaking of the habits of years is playing havoc with my common sense.

All love to you,

KATHIE.

P. S. I was so busy telling you about us, that I did not comment on your letter, but, Nad, such sheer luck I never heard of and I have in my mind’s eye already adjusted every piece of that precious old furniture of Tanta’s, hung all the pictures, put the pet bits of porcelain and carving in their respective cabinets, the books on the shelves and those glorious old rugs on the floors. I wonder if I shall ever possess “fine old rugs”; for some quite unaccountable reason they appeal to me almost more than anything. I feel what you call their atmosphere and a hundred pictures flash before me, of the life of those far away people and times; and I am not given to being imaginative—you know how you girls have always hooted at me about that.

K.

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KATHIE DEAR,—

I feel the prophetic spirit upon me, shall I proph. a bit? No, best not—I will instead later say in that maddening way Marion Kalstead has,—

“I felt that from the first.”

## CHUMS

Can quite well imagine what a time you are all having with your brood, and I shiver to think what enormities the brats will perpetrate, if you let your eye off them for a minute the last day.

You will probably find Micky's puppy and the old, lame, tailless magpie, in with your best hat; and a cage of white mice and a few frogs scattered about amongst the lunch. No, but truly, I think as soon as you get here you'd best give the brats much work to do, or goodness knows in what way they will break out. Take my advice and let them go to the public school, they need discipline, and I think they will like the feeling of rivalry and competition it seems to create. It was all very well to teach them yourself out there, because of the lack of school, but here it is all so different. They write extremely good letters, those irrepressibles; have they "fessed up" to you about the one they sent me?

So you have arranged our Lares and Penates for us. Wonder if they are as we have done it. Truly it looks just lovely, and it was all finished last night—the very last article in place.

Dear old Frau and her Franz, of course, helped us, and we have had our meals with them during these days of business, but this morning we made our own coffee on our own stove, "thank you," and from now on we shall fend for ourselves.

Of course there has been considerable expense attached to our installation, but that is finished and we shall know a month from now just how much it will cost us.

We intend to be perfectly comfy, but not extravagant. Fortunately for our schemes, we have very simple tastes in the way of our "tummies." Our extravagances are apt to be in the book line. Right here and now, lest I forget it, I must tell you of a find that Phil has made—I am green with envy. She was on the way to a little Dutch cabinet-maker's shop, to get him to do some repairing in an old inlaid table,—one of the drawers was

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stuck—and she passed a second-hand book shop so tiny, it was no more than a hole in the wall, a sort of covered stall; and you know how impossible it is for us to pass even a pile of old “mags” without a glance “just to see.” Well there was the usual stuff and she was about to go on when she caught a glimpse of a small, dumpy book with its back off and looking pretty much the worse for wear, which she picked up to find—a first edition of *Hudibras* with a heap of annotations on the margins, written in a fine, clerky hand, with ink that was brown, not black,—

“To my dear Charles Lamb, from C”  
and the dates.

Now we are wondering if the “C” stands for Coleridge, or whom, and we shall re-back it and put it amongst our treasures.

I nearly wept with mingled joy and mad—joy to get a thing that had been one of Charles Lamb’s treasures, and mad that it was Phil, not I who found it. Of the latter feeling I am most ashamed, and this morning I made the “amende honorable”—“fessed up,” in other words.

She said,—

“Oh, you don’t need to say anything, I know all about it. The time you came home with those three Leech plates I had murder in my heart for at least ten minutes.” So we laughed, and it is to go into the studio.

We have decided to put all of the things there is any doubt about in our “social hall” only furnishing our own dens with our really individual treasures.

Of course you want to know how near our arrangements match your mental pictures. But remembering that in six weeks you may be here to see for yourself, I must use this time to better advantage, for time’s woful precious now.

I will just mention that the hall, which is studio, social hall, living-room and workshop, is fifty feet long, has



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a thirty-foot skylight, and two dormer windows at each end, the back ones opening on to a projection of the floor below, which, as I wrote you, gives us a deep veranda sheltered on three sides.

Franz is going to rig up a photographer's curtain for the skylight, of olive green, with an under one of gray, so that we can adjust the light to our needs and desires. In another month it will be warm weather, when the dark green curtain will be a necessity.

Phil's den and bedroom has all the carved rosewood that was in Tanta's room, with the exception of the great wardrobes and the chest we used to call the "sarcophagus," and on the walls, her pet pieces of old embroidery, the old rose and gold ones that were in the octagon room at home, and her desk and two cases of her own books.

My room I have much as it was home, in arrangement, but I used the Louis Seize furniture. The marquetry seems to me the most exquisite imaginable and the whole scheme of decoration was to me the most perfect.

We each have a couch besides our beds and I have covered my walls with that collection of old embroidered and needle-point coats and skirts that was in the gallery.

We have not done anything about the fire-place, that will come when the necessity for it does, in the late fall, but I have a ripping idea for it which Phil said was perfect. We did make a long window door of one of the windows opening into the veranda. We likewise have a wire screen and an awning over the veranda, and we are going to tell Deborah to send us a crate full of the dwarf Japanese trees, the maples and firs and cypress, in the green and blue and white dragon pots, then with a hammock and a couple of basket chairs we can defy the hot weather.

When Frau S. saw our things unpacked, her very round eyes grew rounder and rounder and I verily believe the dear soul must have lost pounds, these last few

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days, trotting up and down stairs, for she is as filled with interest in us and our possessions as can be, and she hates to miss anything, so we have just made her one of us, and she exclaims in heartrending tones, a thousand times a day,—

“Ach, mein lieber Gott, Franz will just to see that”!

Altogether, Kathie, this is a very happy find for us, for the dear woman mothers us and looks after us as though we were her own girls. The second day of our “upsetting,” as she calls it, she announced in tones of great triumph,—

“I hef it, I hef it!”

I said,—“What, Frau?”

And she replied,—“Why, it is all too great a work for you to keep these beautifuls dusted. I myself will do it.”

I sat down there and then laughed until I was weak, she looked so funny, for her cap was away over one ear and she had two sets of glasses pushed up over her forehead, in one very pudgy hand she was flourishing a long blue and white checked dust cloth, whilst in the other she had the fat Chinese God in Satsuma, that used to wag his head at us when we tipped him; and by the expression of her face and tone of her voice you would have thought she had just been made a present of something greatly worth while, instead of voluntarily assuming further duties.

Phil would not listen to it at first, but finally we saw the dear thing was hurt, so we gave in and now I expect we shall be kept in such a state of dustless care that we won't dare to be comfortable. The arrangement only takes in the studio, however.

Franz has made screens for all our windows, so we can have a gale of air, without flies or mosquitoes.

We are quite stuck on ourselves and Phil announced in a very “Superior Lady” tone at coffee this morning,—

“Oh, yes, the bachelor women of to-day do themselves very well, you know.”

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Our serious work commences on the first; and for the next few months I expect we shall find it a bit of a grind, but we realize that life is not all dear old ivy-covered homes and great shady gardens and infinite leisure to do what one wants to do, and then, too, we are both most heartily in love with our work and filled with ambition to excel in it, so that takes the "cuss" off.

Phil is writing you now about the house we told you of, and you two can arrange the financial end of it.

I wrote to Ludweller and told her to break it gently to the girls that they were to join forces with your chicks for a housekeeping winter in New York, with prospects of a continuance, given things went well and they were on their best behavior.

You think your lot are a bit "uneasy" as Deb calls it; well ours are a lot of wild Indians, when it comes to primitiveness of emotion, and have not the Indian control. But, truly, Kathie, what a remarkable set they are—not an ugly duckling amongst the lot of them and a clever set, too; I think there must be something in blood after all. Remember how old Tanta Sophia used to draw herself up to her most stately height when she said,—

"Remember girls, you do not belong to early Dutch stock which meant the tradespeople lot; but to the nobles"—and the dear thing, I verily believe, got much comfort out of the thought.

An amusing incident occurred yesterday, it is too long to tell now. Will tell it to you in all of its details, next time.

From what you tell me of Mr. Farrington I think he must be altogether likeable, and Phil and I howled over your description of how all of you appropriated the good man and in the usual way arranged all his affairs for him, from the disposition of his furniture to the proper laying out of his kitchen garden. I can just see the lot of you around that table, individually and collectively, as you say, laying down the law to him and he, being a



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“‘lonely soul,’” just joying in it. I bet my next find that he would give any old thing to keep you all there. Why what will the man do with all of his gorgeousness when he gets it completed? Positively it’s pathetic.

Love to you all,

NAD.

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MAY 29TH, —

DEAR NAD,—

As Paul, Maxine and the brats have been scribbling to you almost daily and I have been so busy, your long letter was put aside until there should come a lull in my work. Now everything is arranged, many things packed, and for the six weeks to come before our flitting I am going, for the first time in years, just to be lazy. Whether it is owing to the extra work and nerve strain or the unusual heat, I feel a bit done up and listless, likewise not so happy as usual.

Do not, for the world, let the girls know of it but, Nad, I am just having to exert all of my self-control to keep from being actively unhappy. The lovely woods and fields were never so beautiful to me; the favorite nooks by the creeks never so bowery and inviting; and I get such a queer lump in my throat every time the girls go into raptures over leaving that I, who never knew that I had nerves, am conscious of them too much, and such a heartache that I sometimes cannot tell whether it is mental or physical.

Yesterday we were having tea in the orchard and the girls were particularly exuberant and full of plans for “New York,” when Mr. Farrington said to me,—

“Miss Medway, you are the only one who does not seem to be overjoyed to leave.”

And I suppose he must have thought me a stupid, covey thing, for I simply could not keep my eyes from filling and I had to turn away for a minute. I saw a queer little smile on his lips and so I just know he

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thought "poor thing, she has never seen anything or been anywhere and dreads the change from the accustomed." Like old Bossy who, when we sold her, mourned for her stall until they had to bring her back. I remember that the brats had told him of the incident and laughingly said,—

"That's like Kathie, she hates being taken to New York."

Next week he goes to New York on business and I shall ask him to call on you. I am certain you will like him, he is so simple and sincere.

We all went over day before yesterday to lunch at his place, and the girls were wild with pleasure to find that he had already begun to do several of the things they had suggested to him the first day.

He asked me if I would be so kind as to speak to Mrs. Daeton, his housekeeper, about the rearrangement of the rooms, and suggest to her what I thought would be well to put the place on a proper footing for the reception of guests. "For, whilst being a most worthy woman, she is not used to a large establishment," he added.

I felt rather diffident about it until I saw Mrs. Daeton, then all of my diffidence left me. Truly, Nad, it was pathetic: a little, frail slip of a woman, with a nice finely featured face, thin gray hair, done up in a tight little knob, a beautiful black silk frock, and a big lace collar held by a huge brooch, a silk apron, and a great bunch of keys, and little hard hands with the nails worn to the very quick, looking like the hands of a woman who had worked at the hardest manual labor, all of her life. New now to the silk frock, to the lace collar, the responsibility, the ease and the leisure.

I scent a story, but again one that reflects only goodness on the part of Mr. Farrington: I should say, possibly a relation, for there is a something quite indescribable in expression, that reminds me of him, and whilst she does not speak as the well educated do, she is still not

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anything but a little lady: and, too, her voice has tones that remind me of his. As neither he nor she volunteered any information about her, I of course know nothing.

I forgot, presently, that Mr. Farrington was almost a stranger in my enjoyment of the chance to "arrange"—my one gift, you girls all say: so I talked away and it was tea-time before we were half through. By that time, however, I had given her a good number of hints about the management of those lazy, good-for-nothing servants and promised to let her have my copy of Tanta Sophia's menus and recipes: so that when the "guests" Mr. F. expects to entertain arrive, she will know how to make them comfortable. I felt as though I was repaying, in a great measure, Mr. F's goodness to us, when I promised to lend her our precious old book. Only hope his guests will appreciate the things.

Mr. F. came to get me for tea and seemed so pleased to see us interested, and I shook hands with Mrs. Dacton and promised to talk with her again several times, before we left for the city.

As we went along the hall to the library, where the tea was being served by Tillia and the rest, Mr. F. thanked me and said,—

"I have a great fondness for Mrs. Dacton, who was very kind to me as a child, and I fear that she is not being very comfortable here as housekeeper;" then, with a sigh and a worried look—"poor little woman!"

Whilst I think of it, I want to tell you something—Mr. Farrington asked me if he might take the liberty of keeping us supplied with fruits and vegetables when we went to town, as the gardens attached to Farrington Hall are so large that he finds difficulty in disposing of the things.

I said yes very gladly and suggested that he send weekly a hamper to the Fruit and Flower Mission, and to the Hospital for Children.



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He seemed to be delighted with the idea, which was quite new to him, and made a note of the addresses.

I think surely this fortune is new to him, for he does not know what to do with it, although it has leaked out that he has given large amounts to various charities.

When we got home we found a letter from Theodocia and I will forward it to you.

She says amongst other things, that their quarters in the Quarter are delightful, and that she has described their trip, arrival and installation, in a letter to Nell, which Nell is to send to us, and we to you.

She is in her element, is our "Docia."

Love to all, KATHIE.

I have grave doubts as to the advisability of your being so intimate with that young German mechanic, you are too reckless of "les convenances." K.

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JUNE 8TH, —

Now look here, Katherine Medway,—love you I do, but love you I will not if you do not quit the part of "guardian of the family propriety." Goodness! you make me laugh, and will laugh yourself when you meet the Frau's son, to think that you ever imputed ulterior motives to him. Why, if ever on earth there was personified simplicity of motive and heart, it is manifested in Franz Slöter.

Yes, the girls have written daily, and Phil has turned over to Frau Wagner (the owner of No. 1; your new domicile) all of the instructions, and as she (F. W.) is of the order of the elect, you will find it aired, cleaned, painted and scrubbed to the last corner shelf.

Yesterday, at twelve precisely, as I was sitting down to a solitary luncheon, (Phil being down-town) "Diana" Frau came up-stairs quite breathless, to say that a gentleman was waiting in the parlor, and a glance at the two cards she held showed me they were Mr. Farrington's.

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So I just told her to ask him up and I met him at the head of the stairs.

Of course you had told him so much of us, and us so much of him, there was not a particle of ice to break, so in ten minutes we were talking like mad: that is, I was, and he was listening, in that nice "so interested-in-what-you-say" way of his, that went straight to my heart,—when suddenly there burst upon the air,—yes nothing short of "burst" expresses it,—a fearful smell like the combination of a blacksmith shop and a match factory, and I realized that my luncheon was burned. Such a heavenly little pot of sheep's trotters and tongue, that Frau had made for me!

I rushed into the kitchen, after a hasty excuse, and took it off the flame and put it under the faucet, then opened all of the windows that were not already open, to let out the smoke and odor, washed my hands and went back and explained.

He looked so amused until I said "my luncheon," then went red as could be, and said,—

"Good gracious, Miss Eloc, it was utterly inexcusable in me to come at this time, but I quite forgot that it was the hour for luncheon and now, as yours is spoiled by my fault, won't you come and have luncheon with me at the Holland House?"

I explained that it was quite out of the question for several reasons, which I did not give, but I told him that if he would like to win my pardon he might stay and lunch with me.

He was as pleased as a boy and I took him into the kitchen-dining-room, which had cleared a bit, and I grilled some ham, scrambled some eggs, warmed up some potatoes, put a glass of Debbie's "jell" on the table, and we had luncheon.

He enjoyed it all so immensely and was so interested in all of our contrivances for comfort and in the daintiness of the place, and when I was proudly showing my

## CHUMS

kitchen cabinet that Franz had made for me, he said,—

“You are really very happy, are you not, Miss Eloc, and this is a joy to you?”

—meaning our life and its limitations, I suppose, in the money way, and those nice, kind eyes of his looked straight through me as though he were trying to see into my very heart.

So I answered him truly, that I was content, and that the old dreams, old longings for wealth and travel and that big, rich life I had always thought possible with the possession of money only, were not nearly so insistent as they had been.

Phil had taken me to account, only a few days before, for what she is pleased to call my “mooning,” had asked me if I had lost ambition or felt ill and said that she had not heard me say once in a month that I was wild to join Theodocia and her girls in Paris, as I had been doing on an average of twice a day until lately.

Mr. F. went into the studio after luncheon whilst I put away the things, and when I joined him he was looking at the “treasures” and we were going over the old illuminated books together when Phil came home—and fancy! it was four o’clock.

Mr. F. looked aghast, I laughed and Phil was, as usual, “very superior.” There are times when I could shake Phil! But when I told our story and she knew it was your Mr. Farrington and saw how intensely interested he was in the treasures, she unbent and was as nice as nice could be.

We insisted that he stay to tea, which Phil made, and then we sat out on the porch, “our porch,” and we talked. He told us about you and the children, as he calls the lot, and chuckled as he told us of some of the brats’ enormities. Evidently he thinks you are *en masse* hard to beat for good looks and clever wits.

Oh, by the way, did you know that the brats went out to see him one night at ten o’clock, after they were supposed to be in bed and asleep, to ask him to promise



## FAMILY GODS

"cross his heart" that the meadow where the willows are should be left as it is, because when they "got rich," forsooth, they wanted to buy it back so they could build their bungalow there. And then he walked back with them and they climbed up on the woodshed roof and got into their room window.

If they have not told you, do not let them know that *I* have, but when they get to the city you'd best turn the key on them when you tuck them up, as they might be taking prowls about the city otherwise. What a pity they were not boys, those irrepressible brats.

When Mr. F. went we felt as if we had known him for years and we are so glad that he is to be a "friend of the family" and oh, I say, Kathie, what a dear he is!

Phil told me after he went, as we were getting dinner, that to-day at the office there was quite a scene. One of the reporters, a most clever fellow, was arrested for stealing. It is a pitiful sort of story and such an old one. Phil was greatly upset over it and so it seems was every one, as he is a great favorite and immensely clever.

Oh, dear, as I learn more of it, this great world I so wanted to be in and of rather frightens me.

Have been taking a little dash over into Ireland and am more and more charmed with it: you will laugh when I tell you that I have been visiting the "Carews", (thanks to Lever and Mrs. Kilfoyle, and to Jane Barlow) times of long ago and times present, and I find myself having a very soft spot in my heart for the land and the people. Phil says I am a positive manifestation of the atavistic theory.

I truly must stop gossiping with you. Have two-pages of illumining to do this week yet, so to work.

Love to you,

NAD.

P. S. Phil has just come through the room and I can see that she has been crying, cannot imagine what for, unless it be over the affair of the office, and yet Phil is not given to weeps. I do not dare say anything to her

## CHUMS

about her red eyes, you know what a perfect "sensitive plant" she is, but I just hate to have her upset—our calm, cool, Phil!

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JUNE 20TH, —

NAD DEAR,—

Have had it on my heart to answer your letter for days, but have been so upset and unlike myself, I could not.

No, there is nothing especially wrong, except that my heart is so heavy at leaving, and several times lately I have just had to fly to keep from saying things to the girls. I cannot account for it. For awhile back, when it was just a "dream castle" with no hope of its materializing, I was as wild over it as any of us. Now, well—my heart feels like lead.

Yesterday I went up to the Hall, as I had promised Mrs. Dacton to do, and had a long talk with her. She seems to have taken to me, and her poor little face brightened so when she saw me, and after our talk she was quite cheerful, thanking me for all I had done and with a sigh said,—

"Oh, Miss Medway, if I had only had a daughter like you, how happy I should have been."

I rather think she has had a daughter and been unhappy in the possession.

As she was showing me some old receipts there fell out of the papers a little letter, evidently a child's as I could see by the writing, and evidently very old. She picked it up and kissed it before putting it away, saying,—

"My bonny baby, oh, my bonny boy!"

I think some day she will tell me the story, for story there surely is.

Mr. Farrington caught up with me just beyond the lane and walked back home with me. He was evidently greatly pleased with you girls and your kind welcome. So much so, that I was surprised and I suppose showed it, for he said,—

## FAMILY GODS

"I am a friendless sort of fellow, Miss Medway, and coming into this new atmosphere of friendliness and good comradeship is just plain joy to me. I wonder"—and then he stopped and said no more until we arrived at the gate.

I saw, as I turned to say good-bye to him, that he was deep in thought, and that his eyes had the sad look they show occasionally. Just then Tillia came up the path from the willows with Max and Paul following, so I had no further chance to say anything,—but his eyes have haunted me ever since.

Yes, as you say, Nad, the world is a fearsome place and I, too, get a frightened feeling when I think of it.

KATHIE.

---

JUNE 28TH, —

I have discovered, Kathie dear, what ails Phil, but I am still so astounded and upset that I can hardly bring myself to write of it.

It seems that the young man who was arrested last week in the office is a Philip Dacton whom Phil, our Phil, met two years ago whilst on that visit to Nell and it seems has corresponded with since, which was "Startler Number One"—then, that for a year she has been half engaged to him, but afraid to let us, or rather Tanta Sophia, know, "Startler Number Two." They had intended waiting for another year, until he had got a better hold on the position, before saying anything about it: but during the last six months, he got into a queer set and things have gone wrong, and now this embezzlement, which means prison.

Oh, it is all so awful! and Phil goes about with a white face and such eyes they make me shiver. No one knows but me, but she said I might tell you and begged me to ask you not to talk to her of it.

This Philip Dacton is immensely clever and stood a



## CHUMS

great chance in the office, where he is, as I wrote you, greatly liked. Phil showed me his picture and it is the picture of an extremely handsome man, with something vaguely familiar about it; but she says we have none of us ever seen him.

She was afraid to tell Tanta Sophia, as he was just beginning his career and had not a single recommendation in the way of family or social position, being poor and, I believe, an orphan. So they were waiting until his position on the staff was better.

I confess I was just rabid at her having been so secretive about it to me, when I turn out every nook and corner of my mind to her, but I had not the heart to be ugly long.

It seems to be such a tragedy to her. She has to go to the office as usual and each day comes home looking like a corpse—of course hears a lot of talk which she has to appear indifferent to, but it hurts her horribly. She will get over it and her pride will help her. Oh, this Van Orden pride is a pretty good thing—we may neatly break in two, like an old Nankin plate, but we do not crack and splinter.

Kathie, the realization of the joy and simplicity of life and aim is beginning to come to me, as I see Franz Slöter and know how fine—yes, you need not laugh, fine I say, his life is; earnest work, which his artistic sense has made a thing of beauty; his clean tastes, his highly developed gifts and knowledge of the best in art, literature and music; and his simple life. None of the striving after the fashions of the men about town, content to be an artisan but recognized as an artist in his metier. Yet, I am ashamed to say that because he dresses in a different way from the men we have known, wears queer boots and soft shirts, I cannot, with any comfort, go out with him. For which thing I hold myself in infinite contempt, paltry, small souled, peanut-brained thing that I am.

Yours in disgust,

NAD.

## FAMILY GODS

JULY 6TH, —

NAD DEAREST,—

Have been in such a ferment, since your letter came, that I could not settle to an answer.

Tillia has justified her resemblance to her famous Aunt and I am just heart-broken to find that for a year and over she has been deceiving me and all of us. Has been corresponding with a boy,—or man, I suppose he should be called, as he is twenty-five,—and is engaged to him.

They met at the parsonage, during that time that Mrs. Adams was so ill and Tillia used to go over and read to her, and this lad was boarding at the Caxton's and sketching. He is an artist, or a *would-be* one. It seems every blessed day after Tillia read awhile to Mrs. Adams she would meet him and spend the rest of the afternoon with him; all innocent enough, you say. Yes, if they had been open about it and she had brought him to the house, where we all could have met him. But this long course of deceitfulness and secrecy—goodness knows why it was not found out long ago, with the brats scouring the country the way they do, and Paul fern hunting and wood flower gathering all over the place! But it was not, until last week when Max, on her way home through the alder clump, came upon them reading under the trees, his arm around her and her silly little head on his shoulder.—Then there were heroics on his part and tears and explanations on hers.

Max brought them back in custody, so to speak, to me. Talk about being taken aback! I was simply speechless for awhile. Then I got a thorough explanation.

He is by name Allan Brooks, son of a professor of the same name in C—— College. Only child, spoiled of course, and by profession an artist. Supposedly clever in a way. Makes a living, such as it is, and is one of the type I loathe,—too pretty and too effeminate. No force, no anything that I like, but of course captivated by

## CHUMS

Tillia's beauty, and filled with great intention to do or die for her.

The thing has resolved itself into this,—they are to be married. Nad, I simply dared not refuse. I hate it, I dread it, but I feel helpless, for Tillia is of age and quite obstinate enough to go against me if I refuse my consent, so I am forced to give it.

His father will allow them a hundred dollars a month, which added to what he hopes to make by his pictures will keep them going in some little hole-and-corner sort of way, I call it. "In a charming, artistic, studio sort of way," they call it and seem to think it consists of a big attic, north light, old armor, old rugs, makeshift furniture, plaster casts and a long perspective of chafing-dish meals and hugger-mugger housekeeping.

Have been so full of my woes I quite forgot to say how badly I feel for Phil and parenthetically for you, dear, but Heavens! Nad, if the man is of such a character, thanks be it is discovered now, not later. My poor old Phil! My heart is heavy at the thought of her trouble. Oh, how upsetting a thing is this love! Give her a hug for me. Yes, the Van Orden pride will help out.

Went up to the Hall to see Mrs. Dacton,—queer the name of Phil's young man is the same,—but found out she had gone to New York. Saw Mr. Farrington and he looked fagged and queer.

He has been so kind and nice about our muddle and so encouraging and hopeful about the two "babes in the woods" as he calls them; seems to think it is the way with "love's young dream" to do silly things and altogether entered into my dilemma and was so very helpful. Found out all about Allan's people and has, I really suppose, helped to bring things to the present pass of a wedding in the very near future, so near that it is to be before we break up here. Even offered his house, but I put my foot down about that.



## FAMILY GODS

She shall be married here, in the old home where I have struggled so many years with her, and it shall be as simple and quiet as possible; only you girls and Doctor Adams, his wife, Allan's father and mother and his two cousins.

Will let you know when it is to be and your chicks must come.

Yes, we can manage all right, and even though I feel sore it would not be fair to the child not to make it as pretty and happy as possible, this first wedding in the family.

Love to you,

KATHIE.

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JULY 10TH, —

KATHIE DEAREST,—

True to our vow of "truthspeaking" to each other, even when it is unpleasant, shall say to you,—that you are wrong in your attitude towards Tillia.

Now I will tell you what I think was in part the reason of what you call her "deception."

First, the child is in absolute terror of your condemnation, gentle as it is, and having that queer strain in the blood and her almost oriental sense of and necessity for "smooth, comfortable living" and fear of crises, would of course do exactly what she has done. Then this first love came to her in so sweet a way that she dreaded to have it handled roughly and be made the subject of the remarks and criticisms of you older ones, and of the jeers and mischief of the never-to-be-kept-under brats. I have a great feeling of understanding for that, and I had long ago made up my mind that when *my* prince put in his appearance, we would do very much as Tillia and her lad have done.

You know, Kathie dear, these huge families are altogether lovely in most ways, but in a very few ways try-

## CHUMS

ing, and I could feel myself an orphan and friendless, with joy, at times. *That would be one of the times.*

So, don't be so tragic over the young folks, and do be quite certain that they will get more fun and downright enjoyment out of their "hugger-mugger" housekeeping, at least while the glamor is on, than many a more correctly established couple will, in a perfectly appointed home. Likewise, youthful "tummies" can stand much in the way of indigestible chafing-dish meals, and apparently thrive on the régime.

Of course there will be dust in the corners and under the furniture, the rugs will not be thoroughly beaten sufficiently often, and the windows will be hopelessly dirty, but they won't see, know or care and they will have such a good time, dear things, my heart goes out to them.

And as to the wedding being pretty, well, I rather think it will! Our first one in the family! Of course the chicks shall come, and you can turn the big hay barn into a dormitory, where at least twenty of us can sleep. That will give room in the house for the few "careful ones of a certain age" who have never learned the sheer ecstacy of sleeping on fresh straw with the great barn doors wide open to the summer night breezes.

We can use the swimming pool under the willows for our bath room and so make no trouble or disturbance. I am so excited over the thought of it I will give them two of my most precious pieces of tapestry, to help make beautiful that "wonderful studio" and Phil says,—

"Tillia shall have the old squatty English 1720 tea-set and its carved table to hold it."

Let me know when it is to be and I will write the chicks to pack a grip apiece and go the day before.

Lovingly,

NAD.

P. S. Could I bring dear old Frau S.? She would just love to come, I know, and would not be a bit in the

## FAMILY GODS

way. On the contrary, would be very helpful, for even though it be ever so "simple" there are such gangs of us that we are rather appalling in point of number to feed.

N.

JULY 14TH, —

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NAD DEAR,—

Your letter did me heaps of good and helped me to see the "other point of view."

Do you know, I do not believe I have as great an amount of the sense of humor as the rest of you have. Has it ever struck you that way? Answer that, please!

Your suggestion about the "barn dormitory" is good and we will utilize it, and that will give ample room for the people who must have properly appointed bedrooms.

It is decided that the wedding shall be on Saturday, the twenty-first, at noon, under the great grape arbor, which is a thing of beauty now.

The girls are going to make it all as lovely as possible.

Afterwards, the wedding breakfast will be in the grove, spread on long tables, and we are all to be dressed à la Watteau, with Tillia in the peach-and-cream colored silk of the other Hortillia, which fits her perfectly.

I did not want that, feeling as I do about things, but hesitated to object, for it seems to me that I am objecting too often, since you have opened my eyes.

Of course it will be charming if the weather holds good, and we are all offering up prayers to the gods.

Shall want you and Phil to lend us some of the hoarded finery, and, as we are an adaptable lot, we will make it fit and be as careful as we can be of it. Send up a trunkful, that's a dear.

We are living in a whirl of excitement and even *I* find myself "thrilly."

Mr. F. went to New York yesterday.

Mrs. Dacton has not yet returned, but he has put everything at our disposal, which is very nice of him.



## CHUMS

We shall, however, only make use of some of those big, lazy servants, and those I shall take a great joy in "chivvying" a bit, and I promise you they shall earn their keep the days they work for me.

After the house guests leave, which will be on the six o'clock train, the strictly family lot will settle down to a good "heart-to-hearter" as the brats call it, and we shall have Sunday together. Then you will go back to town and we shall complete our preparations for moving.

The bride and groom leave on the four-thirty train for D—, where they intend having a month of honeymoon, after which they will go to town and that studio.

Yes, certainly, bring your "Frau," she will be very welcome, but you need *not* bring the mechanic.

KATHIE.

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JULY 19TH, —

I am so mad I could howl, Kathie dearest; yesterday I fell off a chair, whilst hanging up the dickey-bird's cage, and have given my ankle such a perfectly brutal twist that the doctor says it will mean at least two weeks of no walking, so that knocks me out of the wedding.

At first, when we learned the fact, Phil said she too would give up going, but I put my foot down about that and likewise about the Frau, who also wanted to stay, and have wired Debbie to come to town and look after me for the two days they will be away.

The trunk of pretties you doubtless have received by now, and my eyes fill at the thought that I am not to see that Watteau scene; but I have bound Phil by a hundred oaths to "snapshot" the lot of you on all and every occasion, and she is going armed with plenty of films and her camera in first-rate condition.

Am bothered over Phil, Kathie, she is looking miserable. This trouble and the confinement of the office, during these long, hot days, is telling on her, and although

## FAMILY GODS

we sleep out on the veranda every night, still, she does miss the country air even more than I do, for my missing is purely longing whilst hers seems to be a physical thing.

I have persuaded her to promise to stay four days with you and don't you let her go back on that. She can send her work to the office for those extra two days. She intended giving up the office work and doing "free lance" at home, anyway. I fancy the talk about that man's affair that she cannot escape hearing is, in a great measure, the reason. And he, by the by, will have to serve his time; there is to be no buying off, even were there people to buy him off. The trial is to come off in a fortnight.

I am in such a state of exasperation when I think of his miserable weakness, realize that it can hurt and touch our Phil, our proud Phil, that I find it hard to be sorry for him. There is something in the whole affair more than we, or at least I, have heard, and I have got it into my head that there was some woman in the case, though how there could be under such circumstances I cannot conceive. I wish I knew absolutely.

I wonder if your Mr. Farrington would find out and tell me if possibly I am right. Phil would be so furious that she would put him away from her heart. It seems to me that if I were in such a position as she is and the man were not sufficiently appreciative to keep away from other women, he might have them, and good riddance. But it is easy to settle other people's affairs, is it not?

I have written to the "young people" and sent my gift, or rather Phil is to take it, and I shall fortify myself with two new books I have long had it in my heart to read. Debbie will nurse me and the days will go by, but send me a double portion of wedding cake and write me all about it.

Oh, I could weep with disappointment!

Yours,

NAD.

## CHUMS

5.30 P. M., SUNDAY, JULY 22, —

MY DEAR NAD,—

Have just had tea and all the rest have strolled off to the grove, so I've a moment to myself.

Oh, my dear, we were all so, *so* sorry you were not here. Everything went off in a perfectly ravishing way, not a single mishap, and the weather was beyond words fine.

Phil has taken heaps of pictures of us, and with those and the various accounts you will get, you ought by rights to have a good idea of it all.

Tillia, as you will see, was exquisite. The child never looked lovelier and in the identical dress, with her hair dressed in the same way, was a replica of the other Hortillia.

Mr. F., who has just left for the city, will call on you and give you his account of our festivities, and tell you something that will surprise you.

We have persuaded Phil to stop over next week; she is, as you say, not at all well, poor dear, and Nad, she won't unbosom to me a bit. Of course we have all been so busy, that until last night there was not a minute in which we could talk, free from interruption, but as we were sitting on the barn door-sill about ten,—all the others were asleep,—she told me quite baldly and in a queer, stiff little way, the cold facts, and when I wanted to comfort her and tried to she drew away and said,—

“Don't Kathie, I can't bear it, I don't want any pity.”

The poor thing! I could just have danced on that man's prostrate form with glee, I was so indignant at him, and now today I hear that he is a son of Mrs. Dacton's—Mr. F.'s little old housekeeper and—mother!

What do you think of that for a story, Nad! Oh, the whole thing is too pitiful and too—almost—unbelievable.

It seems that years ago, in Australia, she was a housemaid in the family of a Mr. Farrington, and was be-



## FAMILY GODS

trayed by him and our Mr. Farrington was the fruit of that betrayal.

She was turned away when it was discovered in what condition she was and the man, the brute! let her go without a word; poor, miserable little thing that she was.

The story was told to me of her struggles just to keep alive; then the birth of the baby, and the added effort to keep him with her, until finally when he was eight years old there came an offer from some well-to-do childless people, to take him to live with them, to educate him and start him in life.

Though it nearly broke her heart she let him go and for years saw him only at rare intervals. Then she met a man who seemed to care for her and she, poor, hungry-hearted woman, craving love and companionship, married him and had by him the child who is now Philip Dacton, the man whom our Phil loves.

After a few wretched years, her husband, who was a drunkard and a good-for-nothing, was providentially drowned and she was again left alone to fight life.

In the meantime, the people who had taken her first child had met with reverses, bad years when their sheep died in droves, and finally, fearing to lose all, they sold out and went to America, settling in Illinois. But, whilst making a comfortable living, they could not do more and at last when Mr. Farrington, who was then known as Alex Duncan (being called by their name) was twenty-one they let him go out into the world, much against their heart's desire, but thinking it better for him.

Of his life after, I will some time tell you. It is a long story of long and hard struggle, no great measure of what is called worldly success.

One day they received a letter from a Sydney firm of lawyers, which told of the death of Alexander Farrington, and of a will leaving all of his immense wealth to the child he had had by one Mary Carrol, now Mrs. Dacton. Our Mr. Farrington took the name, entered into

## CHUMS

possession of the money, hunted for and finally discovered his mother, established her in a home of her own and extended his goodness to Philip Dacton, his half-brother. After which he traveled for several years, finally going back to Sydney to find the poor little mother suffering because of the disappearance of the wild boy. He brought her to America and bought the Farrington place. She absolutely insisted upon being known as his housekeeper, only, although he wanted to give her everything and do everything for her.

Then they hunted for the lost Philip, first in England, where he had gone from Australia, then in South Africa, and when all trace was lost of his whereabouts and they had given up hope of finding him—they heard that a young fellow by his name had been arrested for embezzlement, and, upon going to see him in prison, found him to be the long looked for lad.

I really believe that poor little Mrs. Dacton's only comfort is the thought that by her refusal to be known as Alex's mother she has saved him shame and pain.

A pitiful story, Nad, I've a lump in my throat as I write it, at memory of that poor brave soul's face, the pain in her eyes was so terrible. Oh, why must there be such things, when life could be so beautiful.

Awfully sorry, dear old girl, that you could not be with us, and we missed you muchly.

Yours,

KATHIE.

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JULY 26TH, —

Oh, you blessed fraud! you! Mr. Farrington has been to see me and told me the glad tidings, and I am glad beyond words to express.

The dear fellow was so filled with joy to think he had won you, and to think that now he can do for all of the brood! His plans are quite princely, and if he does a

## FAMILY GODS

third of what he wants to for you all, the girls will be utterly spoiled.

The new joy has been so great that he feels the little mother's sorrow only for her sake and says that she must take her proper place and be known as his mother; but after what you have told me of that small woman's strength of determination, I do not believe he will get his way.

He has so many plans, that I am at a loss to know what the immediate ones are.

Does this break up the housekeeping scheme, and if so, won't there be a row and a pow-wow? For as far as I can make out no inducements he could hold out would compensate for the loss of the city joys the girls all look forward to.

Write me all about everything. Am wild with curiosity and interest, and Kathie, you never said whether or not our Phil knew about Philip Dacton's relationship to Mr. F., or Alex as he says he is to be called from now on.

Debbie is taking the best care of me and is, of course, completely happy in being able to "boss the job." She is lost in admiration of the way Frau S. keeps her house, and is never done talking of how spick and span it is. Am just realizing how terrible a trial we must have been to the dear thing all these years, with our wild Indian ways and general untidiness. She also greatly approves of Franz, speaks in an awed way of his good looks and evidently envies his mother her luck in having him. I fancy there is a huge amount of the maternal in Debbie and that accounts for the way she has mothered us and put up with us all these years.

There are many of these dear mother women, aren't there? Tanta Sophia was one, too, and what a sin it is that they have never had but other women's chicks to lavish the love upon. Phil said one day, when I made some such remark, that they were *not* to be pitied for they had a great joy in ministering without the pain of per-



## CHUMS

sonal responsibility, which real parents feel or are supposed to. Phil has a lot of theories on a lot of subjects and works them out like mathematical calculations, and oftentimes your reason is convinced, but your heart is not, after hearing them.

You never said a word about Frau S., but Franz got a yard or two of letter from her by the same mail yours came in, and she gives glowing accounts. Twenty-five-letter words. True, I counted 'em! She has evidently lost her heart to the family, individually and collectively.

There's another mother woman. Should have a dozen children.

Love to the girls,

NAD.

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JULY 30TH, —

NAD DEAREST,—

Alex has just left after a long talk, in which I finally agreed to marry him at once. Then, after seeing the chicks settled in New York with Mrs. Daeton to mother them,—which will have two advantages, give the dear little soul something to worry over, other than her trouble personal, and be a restraining influence on the chicks, —Alex and I will go abroad for a year. He is longing to show me the lovely places he knows and I am longing to see them, and by the time we get back doubtless the girls will have had enough of the city and will come to Far-ridingon Hall with us, where Alex will quite spoil them, I suppose.

It took much argument and a bit of stringency on Alex's part to get me to consent, but Nad, dear, I am wonderfully tired and so, so glad to shift responsibility on to his broad shoulders and tender heart.

I am filled with a sense of great thanksgiving and utter wonder. What have I done to merit this joy? I feel very humble and a bit lachrymose.

The girls have been told and they have nearly taken

## FAMILY GODS

the roof off in their rejoicing. Began to call him Alex at once and the brats called him "Allie"! Only until I could get them alone and reason with them, though, but he is delighted and cannot get enough of all this friendliness.

Everything is to go on about the housekeeping for the girls as we had planned. Alex wanted to give them *carte blanche* but I said no! After this year, when they are back again with us he may do many things for them, but not until. I do not believe one of them has given a thought to his money and their joy is all because they are so fond of him. He told them his story and his mother's. Told it so beautifully, so tenderly that they were awed by it, and when we went to the Hall they were too dear for anything to Mrs. Dacton. I felt so proud of them! And those irrepressible brats began to chum with her at once, much to the dear woman's manifest delight. I fear they will ride rough-shod over her in town; you girls must keep them a bit in order for me.

Phil said nothing when we told her, absolutely nothing. I am so worried over the form her sorrow takes. That numbness, that iciness is terrifying to me. Poor, dear old girl, how my heart aches for her and I feel woefully selfish to be so filled with joy in my own love, whilst she is so stricken in hers.

Oh, Nad, I never thought it was in me to be so sentimental, but, do you know, I wish Alex were poor so I could work for and with him? I love him so, I would marry him if he were a day laborer, and now because of all this brutal money I can never prove how much I do love him.

Your kind Frau S. goes home on Tuesday. We have quite made her one of us and my private opinion is, that she is jealous of Mrs. Dacton, because of her being given the care of the girls. Yes, Nad, she is, as you say, one of the "mother women" and the grandchildren will be adored by her. We have all grown to love her, the dear, kindly, unselfish thing.

## CHUMS

Have decided to marry Alex on the 10th of August, so be up and doing, my Nad. Should not feel that I was legally bound if your eyes did not see the knot tied.

There will be nothing but the wedding service and breakfast at the Hall. Then we shall all flock off together by the afternoon train and during the next week settle Mrs. Dacton and the girls in the little house, and on the 17th we will sail for England.

Love to you,

KATHIE.

P. S. Of course we shall go to Paris and look up Docia and her goslings. My! but won't there be a clacking when we meet.

K.

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AUGUST 3RD, —

"Up and doing," won't I just Kathie dear, if I have to hobble on crutches!

You have arranged it beautifully, but I do feel a bit sorry you are not to be "bridey and satiney." Still, I think you are right, it would not be best to glorify just now, when Alex's poor mother is in such trouble and poor Phil so unhappy, but not every woman would have thought of that in your place.

I can well believe that no one of you has had a thought for Alex's money. Who could, after knowing him?

Am delighted that you are discovering a bit of what you term "sentimentality" in yourself. Of course you wish Alex were poor, you blessed girl! but you will find that you can prove to him the love you have for him, even though he be rich. I've an idea that there are plenty of opportunities in every married life for that, in spite of dollars.

If it had not been for missing the fun and frolic of



## FAMILY GODS

Tillia's wedding I should not be at all sorry for my time of semi-invalidism, for Debbie has been a perfect slave to me and Franz has read to me and amused me so that the days have fairly flown. Truly, Kathie, I am lost in admiration of his gifts and shall in time become reconciled to his clothes. After all, what does it matter that a man wears queer shirts, rather impossible ties, and funny boots?

Am dreading Phil's homecoming. What can I do for her if she will not talk to me and refuses utterly any sympathy. Fortunately she will be very busy, for to-day came the news of two books to be illustrated, and she can, or could get absolutely lost to herself and the world in her work, you know. Franz says a fine engraver is lost in Phil and thinks she should take up etching and engraving. Her line work is remarkably good, he says. I, myself prefer color and feel a lack in black and white, but when I say so he laughs and says, "Butterfly." And last week, when I was washing in some color on an etching and he came up and found me at it, he was positively pained. I laughed, his expression was so funny, but I teased him awhile, then affected to be convinced by his arguments.

The house for the chicks is, I hear from Debbie, all ready and immaculate, which I grin to think of. We know how long it will stay that way with the "lot of 'em."

Our chicks go in on Tuesday. Such wild joy you never saw, and the promises they have made and will promptly break, would fill a book. Oh, well, they are dear lot and this is their fun time, but I must confess I should rather Mrs. Dacton were in charge than myself. I hope for the sake of her peace of mind that she does not take the position too seriously. Better give her a hint.

Love to you,

NAD.

## CHUMS

AUGUST 4TH, —

Oh, Kathie dear, I won't be able to go to your wedding. I slipped and hurt my ankle again and the doctor looks very grave, and says I must be absolutely quiet, and threatens to put on a plaster cast.

Am just heart broken. I cried until I was a fright and got into such a rage Debbie was cross to me and said some horrid things, which I know I deserved, but truly I was so upset and disappointed I could not help myself.

Franz came up whilst I was "whirlwind raising," and looked so surprised and troubled that I laughed and then he looked so relieved that I laughed again and peace was restored. But Debbie had it in for me, as the brats say, and I had to take my medicine and that made me cross. Never did like medicine.

If you want Frau S. to remain, keep her, for everything is apparently going on well. I know Franz looks well fed and Debbie says everything still shines.

Am lost in wonderment over the man. How can he be so manly and still so womaney—and are the Germans not funny?—Debbie says that she finds him cleaning up with one of the Frau's big cheek aprons on and that he never seems to be at all conscious, or appear to think it anything out of the ordinary. And those beautiful, strong hands of his never show to "what base uses" they are put, and he is so clean, personally so fastidious that my heart goes out to him. He is wholesome, Kathie, in body and mind.

Oh Kathie, my dear, my dear,—I am so happy for you. You ask what have you done to deserve your good fortune. Well, my modest violet, if you could hear the things we all say of you, you would burst with pride and we think you are getting no more, not one whit more than you should.

All love and the best of wishes, dearest.

Am sending you the "The Shepherd's Calendar" I illumined, for a little wedding gift. I wish it were more

## FAMILY GODS

or handsomer, but it is my dearest treasure and you have always loved it, so take it, with my love.

Yours,

NAD.

P. S. Keep Phil until after the wedding. No need for her to come back for only a few days. N.

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AUGUST 9TH, —

MY NAD,—

It won't seem half so sweet to me without your dear face amongst the others and I feel tempted to "rage" some, myself, over this second accident,—poor girlie! but we shall see you day after tomorrow and comfort you.

Am tired but happy. In fact, that seems to be the predominant note. We are a bit quiet, the lot of us. Events seem to have tumbled over the heels of events, so fast and so thick that we are all breathless, and then the thought of this general exodus from the old nest has pulled at our heart strings.

We have not thought it best to call Tillia back from her honeymoon, or rather I wrote her it would be foolish to upset their plans for the one day, and she acquiesced in a very sweet letter. Was just a little hurt at the readiness of her acquiescence, but that was sheer selfishness on my part and I take myself to task for it.

Expect to run in and lunch with you day after tomorrow, dear, and have a good talk before I go on to the chicks.

We shall stay the week before sailing at the "Gilsey" and see you all, daily. And during our year away, you and I will keep up the letters, as we have in the past, and will each have new interests to write of, dearest.

For the last time, my chum, I sign myself,

Your,

KATHERINE MEDWAY.





## Life's Great Highway



OW, girls, we must not forget that there is much to be thankful for. We are all well and we are young. You know how often we have said that given health, we would not be afraid to face life with the proverbial shilling," Honor Brenning spoke.

"Oh, yes, we have said that and many other things—sort of thrown the gauntlet to fate, as it were, but then we had Uncle Mat for a fairy godfather, and this dear old place to be confident in. I am free to confess that I am not nearly so certain of my particular gift for wrestling with the world, now that the necessity for it has come.—Are any of you?"

And Nalton turned to her sisters inquiringly. Four rather despondent pairs of eyes looked at her, and only Honor, the first speaker, said cheerfully, —

"Nonsense, girls, it's only because of the suddenness of it all that you feel fearful. You know we always have wanted to get out of the cotton batting sort of life that we have had, and now that we *must*, for goodness' sake, do not be so feeble! Why, here we are, six of us, and if we cannot make a home for ourselves and get something out of life, I think it's strange. I never felt so equal to *anything* as I do now."

This time the eyes were turned towards *her*, and Thelda, the youngest, said admiringly, —

"Do you really, Honor? I feel a perfect human jelly fish, and I would most willingly eat my words, if by so doing I could get back the 'cotton batting' days."

Phoebe took the poker and stirred up the coals, saying,

"Honor's right and we are a lot of soft, spoiled babies. It is appalling in this day of woman's work to feel so dismayed because we must earn our bread, as thousands of women and girls just as well born, just as ten-

## CHUMS

derly nurtured as we have been, do. Well, I propose to make it cake and enjoy eating it. Let's take account of stock. Bliss, get some paper and a pencil. Hon, you put it all down. Let's see, how would we best commence? Oh, I know, each of us sum up her individual riches, then the things that we can all use we will call common property. Take it in order of age. Honor, what will you put down?"

Honor thought for a moment, then wrote down the following,—

"Clothes enough to last for several years."

"Better put that to 'common property,'—I find, as a rule, one of you has on the thing I need for the moment."

There was a general laugh.

Then "jewelry, rather handsome and considerable of it,"—"We will convert most of it into money—put that on the same list."

"Various articles of furniture and bric-à-brac, same."

"Books, several hundred, I will *not* put on the list. Those go in whatever corner I have for my own, if I have to sleep on the floor to make room for them."

"Now, Toney, what about your treasures? It strikes me, girls, that there is going to be a sameness about the lists that will not make for interest, considering the fact that Uncle Mat always gave us things in even half-dozens, so there should never be any feeling of undue partiality. So we all have about the same things, except for small individualities that we have supplied ourselves with, out of our pocket money. Let us lump the jewelry and sell it. Consider that we have, all of us, clothes enough for—what was the term of years you said, Hon? Oh, yes, several. Lucky we have home talent to convert them, when necessary, into things 'à la mode'."

Here Bliss interrupted,—

"Oh, Honor, must we give up all of our pretties? I'd rather go hungry."



## LIFE'S GREAT HIGHWAY

"No you wouldn't," interposed Miriam, "you who look peaked and big eyed if you are not fed up constantly with the best the market affords, and anyway, Bliss, considering the fact that we must from now on be 'work ladies,' jewelry will be out of place and in bad taste. Of course we shall keep our watches and a few little things, but everything purely ornamental will have to go. Good gracious! child, you don't seem to realize that we literally have not a cent in the world, or won't have after all this mourning is paid for."

"Oh, poor Uncle Mat, I do hope he does not know how things are here, for he could not rest if he did," said Phoebe.

"I'm glad you sat on old Welch properly when he said Uncle had been criminally careless because he had left no will and we found ourselves '*plante là*.' I fancy if we do not feel bitter it is not the business of any old lawyer Johnny to feel or say things." And Thelda looked fierce.

"Girls, girls, this is what is termed digression," Honor interrupted, "we shall have ample time to go into that later, but as we must leave on Wednesday and to-day is Saturday, we'd best come to some sort of a decision."

After much talking it was decided that they take a flat, which they knew of as being tenantless, on 142d Street, and in the same building where some friends lived. The rent would be moderate, they would have enough with their various personal possessions to make it comfortable and pretty, and after getting settled they would go to work. This going to work was to each and all a sort of nightmare, but no one betrayed the fact except Bliss who openly lamented.

The jewelry they would ask Mr. Bliss to dispose of for them, and what it would bring they would put by to use only when absolutely necessary.

On Monday they went up in a body to look at the flat, which being satisfactory, they rented, agreeing to pay fifty dollars a month on a year's lease. There were seven

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rooms, all small, but conveniently arranged, and being on the top floor they could use the roof to which their flat had a flight of steps, so they decided to convert it into a lounge during the warm weather by the aid of awnings, wicker chairs and tables, and boxes and pots of flowers.

As they sat about on the window ledges of the front room, which was to be their general sitting room, they planned to get in by Wednesday noon, so it was settled that Honor and Thelda should get the necessities on the following day whilst the others attended to the packing and arranging of the things they were to bring from the old home.

"There really is not much to get, girls," said Honor, as she consulted her list for the tenth time. "In these modern flat houses so many things are built in—even in these cheaper ones—that one can set up housekeeping at a day's notice. Now let us run in and say a word to Patty and get back to work."

Wednesday at five-thirty saw them again gathered in the flat with trunks, grips, baskets, boxes and all of the paraphernalia of the modern girl, multiplied by six, about them, and their first meal was eaten as they found what resting places they could amongst the confusion.

They were in wild spirits, for the pendulum had swung back and now that the wrench of parting from the dear old familiar place and things was over there was a feeling of exhilaration in this radical change and what it presaged of interests and activities new to these girls who had been born with what is termed "temperaments",—which are sometimes good things to have, *best* to have probably when the owners, by some fluke of fortune, have to take up lives that are strenuous; *not* good things to have, given a *too* settled life plan with its almost certain monotony.

After the sandwiches were finished and the tea drunk, they went busily to work and before midnight had things quite a bit arranged.

Their collected treasures "made quite a brave showing

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in the small rooms and left few bare spaces," as Bliss replied, when Tony looking about, said,—

"Thank goodness, we look furnished. I was fearful it might look dreary and sort of impoverished."

"Well, Tony, when you think what a lot of *us* there are, not to mention our possessions, it could hardly look empty, you know. Six large women in seven small rooms! I feel, for one, as though I was quite indecently long and broad." They all laughed and admitted feeling the same.

Presently Honor said,—

"I am simply starved and never felt so wide awake in my life, let's have a spread. It won't matter if we don't get up early tomorrow, for so much has been done tonight. Come out to the kitchen and let us try that ducky little gas stove."

By Saturday everything was in its place and it had been arranged that until it was definitely decided how their time would be filled, there should be an equal division of labor.

Thelda and Bliss, being the best cooks and liking the work, were detailed to keep them fed. Phœbe and Tony would do the cleaning and dusting, and Honor and Miriam would take charge of the commissary department and do any of the things the others could not or would not.

By the end of the following week they had become used to the somewhat straitened quarters and things were all arranged comfortably. Sunday they decided to give up to settling their plans. So, after the rooms had been put in order and a brisk walk taken, at three o'clock they settled down to a "pow wow."

"Every bill is paid, and we can approximately tell what our expenses are going to be," said Honor, notebook and pencil in hand. "The balance in the bank is eleven hundred and ten dollars from the sale of the jewelry"—

"Make it an even eleven hundred, Hon," said Bliss.



## CHUMS

"I want that ten awfully, I'm the only one whose pocket-book is quite flat."

"What did you"—began Phœbe,—

"Yes, what did I do with the four dollars you gave me last week, I suppose you are going to ask. Well, I am not your wife, and I refuse flatly to give an account of my pennies, must I, Hon?"

"See here, Bliss, until we get to earning something, each one of us, we must not spend an unnecessary cent, and now let's get to work. Don't squabble, girls. I know it's half of it fun, but it's a bad habit and, now that we live in each other's pockets, could easily get to be horrid. Phœbe, don't put on such a superior air, Bliss has evidently spent her money, so let it go at that. If you want to really demonstrate your own cleverness, tell us how you happen to have any left, yourself, for I think you're the only one who has."

"Not so much as a quarter have I," said Nalton, turning her purse inside out.

"I've two dimes and some pennies," Miriam owned. "Bliss, we have just been informed, is absolutely busted and so are you, Hon, Phœbe's our capitalist—the bloated plutocrat of the family—how much have you left, Phœbe?"

"Well, except twenty cents, I have all of the ten dollars that Honor gave each of us. I thought we had to be careful, so I did not spend anything except that car-fare."

A shout went up.

"Oh, you blessed thing, you are the most downright literal character I know," laughed Bliss.

"She is perfectly right, girls," said Honor, "and it shows how much more self control and realization of the condition she has than any of the rest of us, good old girl!" And she leaned over and patted the shoulder near her. "Now, to business—I'll take you first, Phœbe, what are your plans for dollar earning?"

"Teach Fanny and Grace March, French and drawing

## LIFE'S GREAT HIGHWAY

from ten to eleven-thirty five days a week for twenty dollars a month. Two afternoons a week go to Mrs. Altgood to write letters, read aloud and make myself generally useful in that sort of way, for ten dollars a month; total, thirty dollars a month."

"Whew," whistled Bliss, "how, did you get them?"

"Went and asked for the work and got it. I fancy I must have rated my services rather low, but I guessed at the value, for they both jumped at the chance and I have been so uncomfortable ever since, lest I may have ousted someone else."

"No, I don't think you did, Phœbe, for I remember hearing oh, as much as six months ago, that they were each looking for someone to take those positions."

"How were they,—nice?" asked Nalton.

Phœbe shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, yes, nice enough, but not the same kind of 'nice'. I learned my first lesson in the proper gradations of manner with them."

"Shall you mind doing it?" enquired Nalton.

"I can tell you better in a month, but I have made up my mind that I will do my best. After all I shall have two entire days and four half-days free, and that is so much better than being cooped up from nine until three, or eight until five, as I should if I took a position as teacher or did office work, and I am going to try for some illuminating to do. Remember Dimples told us how well she did and she said my work was quite as good as hers. Anyway there is thirty dollars a month towards the expenses."

A little silence fell upon the others after Phœbe finished speaking. Her quiet acceptance of the position and her having gone about its bettering so immediately and practically, made the sisters feel what they had often felt before less strongly,—Phœbe's inherent strength and force, hidden though it was, under the rather placid and quiet exterior.

## CHUMS

At last Honor said,—

“Your’s next, Nalton.”

The girl lifted distressed eyes to her sister and answered,—

“Positively Hon, I am ashamed, but I have not the remotest idea what to do or how to go about doing it. I do not seem to have a single talent, nor do I know anything well enough to teach it, and I would rather scrub floors than teach, anyway. It looks as though I should have to go behind a counter, doesn’t it?”

“Oh, no, you shall not!” cried all of them.

“But what else can I do?”

“Well, let that drop for the moment, I have an idea which I will give you after awhile,” said Honor. “Now, Bliss?”

Bliss squirmed and looked miserable.

“Oh, I suppose I shall have to be a nursery governess. I’d rather that than a counter, but——”

“Now see here, girls, before we go any further,” said Honor, laughing, “possibly it is as well to suggest that this really is a case where bread and butter must be earned; and may I remind you of the fact that only a short week ago we were all of us thrilling at the thought of our ‘liberty of action,’ that is, all but Bliss. I must do her the justice to admit she groaned. Now, my vicarious experience has taught me that a good deal lies in our own attitude towards work, whatever it is, and if we will try to like it we can, and get a lot of fun out of life, too. Look at all of Theo’s chums—they are the nicest and jolliest lot of women I ever knew, yet they are not exactly what can be called drones, now, are they?”

“No, they’re not, go on, Hon, we won’t shirk any more,” said Miriam. “My turn next, is it not? Well, I am to be office lady for Madame Sancho. Went yesterday and told her I had to go to work and asked her if I could not replace Miss Neal, the woman she has now, who is to be married shortly. Oh, we had quite a ‘heart



## LIFE'S GREAT HIGHWAY

to heart' talk, and the kind old thing wept over our financial downfall as though she were an old friend. I am to go on the first. Lucky for me I have what Madame calls a 'most engaging manner' for it's principally that that's wanted. The system of bookkeeping a small child could attend to, but I am to meet the customers and hypnotize them into ordering two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar gowns when they come with the firm intention of being economical, you know, as Miss Neal used to do with us. It will be great larks and I shall not mind it at all. The pay is forty-five and the hours eighty-thirty to five."

"You sly thing! and you never said a word, neither you nor Phœbe! Well, that's a big load off my mind," said Honor. "Now Thelda, speak your little piece, honey."

Thelda looked up amusedly and answered,—

"You are going to get the shock of your lives, girls, catch your breath, I am going to be cashier in a ten-cent restaurant! I knew you would be amazed but here's how it happened. You know cook's brother had such a success with that waffle kitchen of his that he is going to open another, and I heard cook telling Kate one day so I asked her to speak to her brother for me. She nearly dissolved in 'weeps' and would not hear of it until I threatened to go somewhere else if she did not. Then she gave in. And I am to sit on a high chair behind a cash-register and take dimes, likewise keep my eagle eye open to see that things go smoothly. Won't it be fun? I am as pleased as Punch over it. Always did long to be where I could watch people and particularly the bread and butter getters! And my salary is to be seven and a half a week, but I do not have to get there until eleven and I can leave at five—it's only a lunch and tea place. Mr. Finn wanted to give me more, but whilst I appreciated his kindness,—nice old fellow!—I did not propose to be under obligations to my ex-cook's brother, so I found out what his other cashier got and that settled it."

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"So,—three of you have had your little plans laid and never said a word—I suppose you told each other, though?"

The girls laughed.

"That's the funny part. None of us knew a word about the others until just now. We were evidently each intending to be the 'entire show' in the surprise line."

"What is your plan, Honor?" asked Nalton. "I feel completely crushed. It looks as though I am to be the only unenterprising one. Bliss doesn't count, she's just a pretty spoiled baby, anyway."

"I will tell you my part, first," answered Honor, "and you can come in if you want to, honey. In fact, I hope you will. I am going to open a dancing-school and I want your help.

"Oh, how jolly! let me, too," said Bliss, waking up. "I can dance if I can't do anything else, and Nalton can play for us. She always could keep time. I can play, but I'm no good at dance music."

"Well, last year at W., when we were there, I heard so many mothers grumbling over the fact that the children had to be sent to town for their lessons and wishing that a good teacher would open a class there, that the thought came to me—after the necessity for work came—to open a school, say lessons twice a week. I think I can get the hall there and I will go tomorrow and make certain; likewise see the many 'Mamas' and find out just how things can be arranged. I rather fancy it will be acceptable, and if Nalton will play and you, Bliss, will help teach, we ought to be able to take a great many pupils and I have thought of a number of new features quite different from the ordinary dancing school, that will, I am certain, make it popular. I suppose I shall have to go to some expense in fixing up, but if I can get, say, fifty pupils promised, that can be considered all right.

Now, let's see just how we stand.

## LIFE'S GREAT HIGHWAY

Phœbe, thirty.

Miriam, forty-five.

Thelda, twenty-eight or thirty-two.

The rest of us yet, uncertain. Anyway, we can live on a hundred, rent inclusive."

"Oh, Hon, it's impossible!"

"No, it's not. I have it down in black and white. As I shall be the one with the most time, I will be the 'hausfrau' and banker. You can each do your share of the work before you leave, mornings, and the things you have no time for Nalton and Bliss must do. That will keep us all busy and yet no one will be an actual slave. In fact, really, we shall have almost too much time, but that is nice. I had rather feared that we might have to take positions where we should be tied down to too long hours, but this way we can go on with our pet fads almost as well as before."

The hall was rented, a piano moved in, a dainty dressing room arranged, the floor polished. Pupils flocked to the class and at the end of the month it was found that Honor had been justified in her idea. She had changed the ugly, big room, by having the walls tinted a soft, dull red; hanging baskets and stands of potted plants filled windows and corners. Comfortable seats were arranged for the mothers and governesses, and the little maid in attendance, in smart cap, cuffs and apron, served tea to all of the older ones, who played audience.

Honor, Nalton and Bliss dropped their mourning for the class days and looked their freshest and nicest in pretty frocks, so that the class days became sort of social reunions, and the mothers, aunts and older sisters looked forward to them as well as the children. Honor had introduced several innovations and things went merrily.

The girls' brave acceptance of their altered fortunes and evident intention of making the best of things appealed to the hearts of these people, who had known them



## CHUMS

during their uncle's life when it was supposed that his great fortune would some day be theirs, as the good man had fully intended it to be; but Death had come unexpectedly, suddenly, and the man in his prime was taken, without having time for carrying out his plans for them.

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The six girls sat about the tea-table, one afternoon a year after their installation and the beginning of the new life, laughing over Miriam's accounts of the happenings of the day at Madame Sancho's and Phœbe said,—

"It strikes me that we have all of us made strides in development, I know for one, I have; at least I have learned to feel quite indifferent to the atrocities of the March children. You remember how we 'scorned at' the Heavenly Twins as being impossible children? I scorn no more. The outrages these March darlings are guilty of put the H. T.'s in the shade, but I do not have murder in my heart any more for them, thanks be! and I have even acquired a sort of liking for old Mrs. Altgood, so I consider I have done something worth while."

"Yes, you have *that*, and you have had by far the worst of things. The rest of us have been pretty lucky and got more fun than annoyance out of our work."

"I get the most fun," said Miriam, "you would say so, all of you, if you could go through just one day with me. Human nature, feminine human nature is awfully quaint and maybe I do not get it 'au naturel' at Madame's. I can't say I am altogether lost in admiration of it, but it is certainly funny."

"Yes," interposed Thelda, "you come into contact with the rich, fussy sort, whose todays and tomorrows are consumed in the arduous duties of adornment, principally, but I see the ones to whom life is a serious thing: whose todays are counted lucky that give a lunch at Finn's, and whose tomorrows are more or less problem-

## LIFE'S GREAT HIGHWAY

atical. I have got so now that I can pretty well tell by the orders given how the finances stand, and there is one girl who is a constant source of interest to me. She is possessed of two appetites, one for clothes, the other for food, and when I see her in a new article of apparel I know that for a longer or shorter time she is going to have bean soup *and* mince pie. Occasionally there come a few days when she indulges in soup *and* stew with ice cream, but that's between seasons when the shop windows are a bit dull and there are no feathers, flowers or novelties on view. She is a pretty thing too, pity that someone cannot make her see that her prettiness really does not need anything to set it off, but possibly a trifle more of soap and water."

Honor nodded.

"Yes, I used to wonder why people of the working class could not wear simple, sensible things, before I belonged to said class, but I found myself stopping a dozen times in my walk down town yesterday, to look at and desire the things I saw in the windows."

"Why will they wear cheap hats with flowers and feathers that look shabby in a week? Why wear silk waists that crack and fade? Why not plain walking hats and shirtwaists that can be washed"—

"Just because they long for, hunger for the articles prettier, in their eyes, at least"—

"Oh, yes, it's a hunger as great, if not greater than the actual physical kind. Thelda's girl of the bean soup and pie is an example. Poor dears! I wish every one of them could have bushels of flowers and yards of feathers," put in Bliss.

The others shouted.

"Poor old baby, does it want some new pretties?" asked Honor. "Well, I don't know why it's out of the question. We are all of us getting on and putting something away for that proverbial rainy day, and we have faithfully refrained from buying a single article of cloth-

ing or adornment since a year ago. Yes, I think we might all indulge in pretties."

Bliss gave a sigh of complete satisfaction. "Pearl gray cloth suit, pearl gray Neapolitan straw toque with rose buds and cut steel buckle, and one of the newest and loveliest lingerie waists—that will be mine!"

Every one laughed at her absorbed expression.

\* \* \* \* \*

One late afternoon the door into the sitting room was cautiously opened, an enquiring eye peered in and then the door was closed as cautiously, no one noticing but Phœbe, who rose presently and went out.

"What is it, Hon?" she asked, going into the little kitchen where Honor was busying herself.

"Oh, you saw me, did you? That's all right, I wanted to catch your eye, if I could—are the others safe for the moment? I want to show you something."

"Yes, they are all busy, what is it?" taking the folded paper.

"Read it!" Phœbe opened the note and read,—

"My Dearest Girl: For goodness' sake do not at this late date get attacks of conscience, it would be too absurd,—but put on your prettiest and meet me at the 'Met.', at the usual time—there will be a lot of charming people at Sam's, and we shall have a jolly time.

Tell that dragon of yours, if she asks questions, that you are going over to Belle's to dinner and to stay the night, you can go over there to sleep, for I asked Belle, and she said she would be delighted.

Yours,

HORTILLIA."

Phœbe looked up and Honor said,—

"It fell out of Bliss's pocket and I picked it up and read it before I realized. I am the 'dragon,' evidently, but why? And see here, Phœbe, I have been afraid of this for some time, Bliss is such a pretty, silly, lovable



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thing, that of course it's out of the question to think she is not going to want and to get the fun and frolic she thinks hers by right of her youth and her prettiness, and I want her to have a jolly time,—but I do *not* want her to go with Hortillia Brooks and her crowd—the tone is *horrid*, I think. I may be old fashioned, but I don't like it, and for goodness' sake why this mystery anyway, why the fibs?"

Phœbe laughed as she looked at Honor's indignant face.

"Want the truth, Honor?"

"Of course."

"Well, you have always lorded it over us, you know, because of your few years' seniority, you have been rather what Kathie was with her girls, and whilst the rest of us have not minded much, Bliss is such a soft little coward that she would rather keep her small secrets to herself than expose them to your notions, sometimes a trifle severe. What are you going to do about this?" handing back the note.

"I am going to tell her I read it and ask her why she cannot be frank. I suppose 'Sam' is Sam Allinson, the painter, that chum of the Brook's, and it is to be one of those studio affairs that fills Kathie with disgust and Hortillia with delight. Well, Bliss is of age, I cannot prevent her doing as she wants and I certainly shall not gain her confidence by going against her, but I do wish she would marry that nice Harry Miller whom we all like and know."

"Well, she won't, my dear Hon, that's certain; he is altogether *too* everything he ought to be, Bliss wants more romance!"

Miriam came in as Phœbe said this, and laughed outright.

"Bliss wants romance. Oh you two blind geese! What our Bliss wants and intends to have is all of the soft things of life, the luxurious things, the things that make

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for enjoyment; our Bliss is materialism personified, and I am surprised that you have not seen it. What's up anyway?" as she looked at her sisters.

Honor told her.

"Oh, don't worry, I know all about it, there's to be a studio tea at Mr. Allinson's, a trip to the other side of the city for a dinner at a dirty, little, dago restaurant which is supposed to be 'killingly artistic,' and after that she is to go to Belle's for the night. It's all harmless enough, but the element of the 'out of the ordinary,' the sort of emancipation seems to appeal to the girls; anyway Hon, you need have no slightest fear of Bliss doing anything that would be romantic—such, for instance, as marrying a poor artist, as Hortillia did. That is the very last thing she will do.

I heard some people talking of Hortillia today at Madame's; it is too bad she is so thoughtless and careless of opinion, for really, I do not think it is anything more than that. What remarkable beauty the girl has. I saw her as I was coming home and positively she is rather striking.

I think you'd best go hunt up Bliss now, Hon, and give her back her note, and have it out; but whatever you do, don't make her feel like a criminal because of her small deception."

As Honor went out, Miriam said to Phœbe,—

"This being one of a large family has its disadvantages at times, but on the whole we are a very happy lot, and have almost no friction, don't we? Poor old Hon! she's such a dear! but she really is a bit old fashioned."

A couple of weeks after this conversation Bliss said at dinner one night,—

"I met Mr. Welch to-day and he was very interested to know how we all were, said he intended coming up to call soon; he is just back from a trip out West and looked ten years younger. I wonder how old he is?"

"Fifty-five."

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"Sixty."

"Forty-five," answered Miriam, Thelda and Phœbe.

"I never did like that man," said Honor, "I always have distrusted him, and that fold of red fat in the back of his neck I always long to snip off with my manicure scissors."

"And his hands," said Thelda, "I hate his hands, they are too wide and dimply, and he uses them too much."

"I think he is very nice and kind, and you know Uncle Mat said he was a wonderful man, and the cleverest lawyer here," said Bliss.

Miriam looked up sharply,—

"Yes, he is clever, I heard at Madame's that he had just won the biggest case and the biggest fee a man ever won in the State."

"What a perfect encyclopedia of useful knowledge Madame's is; how on earth can people be so foolish as they are, in their selection of places to gossip?"

"Girls, I am disgusted with the people who go to make up our old world. I see so much of it there and hear so much that seems mean and sordid and unlovely. Gossip not of the innocent, pleasant kind, but cruel, hurting and harmful things. Why, oh why are women so horrid?"

"The world's not so bad, Miriam, but the class that you come into contact with, our old class, is simply suffering from misdirected energy, too much physical ease and leisure. It would be a godsend, if some great financial cataclysm could do to them what our small domestic one did for us and give them something that they were forced to do, for just bread and butter. Here it is a year, now, since we picked up the gauntlet Fate flung. I, for one, would not go back to the old easy life, with its futilities, would any of you?" asked Honor.

"No, we would not!" said Phœbe.

"Well, I guess not!" exclaimed Thelda. "What! miss seeing all of the people at Finn's? There are seven small romances I am keeping tabs on, not to mention that



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I am now the confidante of several whose affairs are in a slightly tangled condition. Martha Holding came in to-day with those two blessed babies of hers to tell me that pretty little Nora Brady and her big policeman husband had made up their matrimonial woes just because of my influence over Nora, and that they were going to take a flat in the Holding Building and live happy ever after. Martha is looking lovely! how she has bloomed since her marriage! She is still head and front of all the settlement work, in spite of her new duties."

Bliss had gone out of the room as the conversation continued and, noticing her absence, Nalton asked,—

"Did you know, girls, that Bliss had refused Harry, again?"

Phœbe groaned,—

"Oh, the small goose that she is."

"But, Phœbe, much as we would love to see her married to good old Hal, surely it would not be well for her to marry him if she did not love him," said Miriam.

"It is not going to be a question of love with Bliss, it will be a question of dollars."

"Oh no, dear, you are wrong to say that, why what have you ever seen to lead you to think Bliss would marry just for money?"

"No, she will not, as you put it, marry *just* for money, but she will discover all sorts of likeable or lovable traits in some man who has money, and she will always be able to see those 'lovable traits' as long as the man shall live and the money last."

Honor looked pained and Miriam got up and went over to her, putting an arm about her and giving her a hug,—

"You dear old simple hearted thing, how anyone as clever as you are can be so simple, I don't see. But cheer up, old girl, our Bliss is not going to be anything but supremely happy up to the last moment of her life, and as for the rest of us, well, you have had our declaration of content."

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"The tea is sloppy, Honor, put in some more leaves."

"Oh, is it, dear? I thought I had measured seven spoonfuls into the pot; hand me your cup and I will give you a fresh one," and Honor took the cup from Thelda's outstretched hand and, still holding it, drifted off into a brown study, whilst the girls looked at her, then at one another. Finally, Phœbe took the cup out of her hand and said,—

"Come back, Hon." And the others laughed.

"What's on its mighty mind?" teased Nalton.

Honor looked about at the smiling faces a moment, then laughed nervously.

"Was I mooning, girls? Yes, I believe I was, but the fact is I have had a severe shock this afternoon and I have not quite recovered. Kathie Farrington was here and told me some things that have troubled me."

"Here, dear, let me do the tea act, you sit over in the big chair, you're all shaky, what's the trouble?" And Thelda pushed her gently into the chair and took her place at the tea-table.

"Yes, what's the trouble, dear?" asked Phœbe.

Honor looked into the anxious faces, and answered,—

"Hortillia Brooks has run away with the painter Al-  
linson and Kathie feels heartbroken."

"Oh," said Miriam, "what a pity! And those beautiful babies of hers, what of them?"

"Kathie has taken them."

"Well, they will be better off with Kathie, Hortillia is not what could be called an ideal mother."

"Where's Bliss?" asked Thelda; Honor nodded towards the next room,—

"She, it seems, has known that this was contemplated but thought it might be prevented. Now that it is an accomplished fact, she is feeling badly to think that she did not let Kathie know how things were."

Miriam shook her head. "It would not have done the slightest good, so she might as well save her tears. Hor-

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tillia would do as Hortillia desired to do from her babyhood up, no persons or circumstances could stop her. I fear me Hortillia is destined to walk very much in the footsteps of that famous great-aunt of hers."

"Oh, what a muddle things are! Hon, did Bliss tell you anything else?" asked Thelda.

Honor looked up. "No, what,—what about? What do you mean?" she demanded, looking startled.

"Oh, nothing of this sort, dear, only rather interesting as it bears out what Miriam prophesied a few months ago. Old Welch, or Mr. Mortimer Theodore Welch, has made known to me by direct word of mouth (he is afraid of you, Hon,) that he wishes to enter the family circle in the capacity of adoring husband to Bliss, and she has accepted him."

Honor rose quickly and started for the door,—

Phœbe caught her arm and Nalton said,—

"Honor dear, don't look so stricken, Bliss says that 'she thinks she will be very happy with him,' and after all it is Bliss who will marry him. She likewise confided that she thought him very lovable."

"Oh! Oh! how can she?"

"Oh! Bliss *can*! You know I said that would be the way of it, but I confess it did not occur to me that the man would be old Welch."

"Girls, how long have you known this, and why did you not tell me?"

"I have known it two hours and twenty minutes," Thelda answered, "but suspected it two months."

"It's news to me absolutely," said Phœbe.

"Bliss told me yesterday," admitted Nalton.

Miriam shook her head as they looked at her,—

"No, I have had no confidences from anyone, but I really do not think it is a bad thing, the man will adore her, give her everything she wants, and after all Bliss is content, that is the main thing. Oh, I know, Hon, what you feel, that he is too old and we are not any of us



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greatly enamored of him, but when I see all of the marriages made for love, and between people of the same age, that go to utter smash—look at Hortillia Brooks, for instance—truly, I do not dare say that this ought not to be just because of the difference in age. I really think I know Bliss better than any of you do, she is as cold blooded as can be under her dimply softness. She is one of the little tabbies of life, the beautiful Persian tabbies, and as long as she is made much of and has all of the good things, she will be quite content. You have hoped that she would have a lovely, thrilly love affair, and all sorts of the nice, sentimental things, bless you! But Hon, truly, you have never understood Bliss.”

“Evidently not,” sighed Honor.

\* \* \* \* \*

The wedding was a church one, and the bridal couple went to Europe on their honeymoon. Bliss wrote happy letters, faithfully recounting all of the interesting doings, and no slightest cloud marred her apparent joy in the life she had chosen.

At the little flat the others went on in their usual way, getting much from the days and growing nearer than ever.

It was a busy life that they led and their joys were of the simplest, but they were all learning much that made for growth of character and strength.

Thelda's work taking her, as it did, into the world of the “work-a-day,” with its hard, practical problems, was the one most interesting, because to them all the newest one: and at the supper table each night there were things to be told, little glimpses into the lives where struggle was spelled with a large S. They were seeing more of the settlement people and finding themselves drawn into some of the activities of that busy, small world.

One night a week Honor or Nalton played for the

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young people to dance, at "Holding Hall," the big, new amusement hall of the settlement.

One afternoon a week Phoebe, Honor and Nalton taught in the free "Crafts School" and they, one and all, had grown to understand what was meant when the term "absorption in settlement work" was used.

These girls whose place on the social ladder was, by right of birth and upbringing, at the top, were finding that the real interest was to be found far below, on the lower rungs, where human nature was not overlaid with any veneer of make-believe, but was very primitive in its emotions, very near to the eternal verities; and in consequence worth watching and often worth admiring. Oh so often, there was much of helpfulness, of tenderest sympathy and active assistance given and accepted, so much of unselfishness shown. Then, too, they were constantly being surprised at the discovery of gifts, mental and spiritual, and quite lately they had been greatly interested in a series of lectures on socialism, given by an old college chum of Doctor Holding's, who had joined the band of workers and was gaining great influence in the district because of the fact that he had been born in the slums, been everything that the slum boy is, up to a certain age, then by sheer force struggled out and up, and after working his way through college had come back to them, helpful in his broader knowledge and by the force of his example pointing the way to the possible achievement of any who would, like him, use the powers nature has given.

Yes, life had grown richer for them, was meaning much.

"Here's a long letter from Theo, girls, and she says that there's a chance of her coming over next month on business; I ran up to Martha Holding's to tell her the glad tidings, that's why I'm late," said Honor, coming in glowing from a brisk walk. "I met Mr. Dean there and he walked home with me."

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"Why did you not ask him in to tea?" asked Nalton, whilst Phœbe and Thelda exchanged glances.

"I did, but he had not the time, he said," replied Honor, simply.

"You walked all of the way home, why did you not take a car?" asked Miriam.

Honor looked puzzled. "Why really, I don't know, we were talking about the addition to the settlement house, and I suppose we forgot all about the fact that there were cars; but oh, I do hope I did not delay him, he mentioned at Martha's that he had to go up to 160th Street, to look up a reference to give in to the Board to-night."

"Well, don't worry, old girl, I suppose he knows his business and how much time he can spare. Let's see Theo's letter whilst you take off your hat. I'll put the tea to steep, we were only waiting for you and we're all hungry, so hurry up."

After Honor had left the room, the girls laughed softly,—

"Isn't she the dearest baby of a woman, it's never entered her head yet that the Dean person is head over heels in love with her and that she is pretty far gone herself," said Phœbe.

"Ssssh! don't let her think we are discussing her, girls, I would not have anything happen to take the bloom off her little romance for anything, bless her! Here she comes."

Over the supper table, they discussed the possibility of Theo's coming over; and each told her news of the day. It was a favorite time of the day to them all, and the small frets and bothers of their lives and work fell away before the fun, frolic and happiness of their being together. The interest and pleasure far outweighed the worry, and each felt that she had gained in the struggle with the world what was of value and made for growth mentally, spiritually and intellectually, and had no real regret for the vanished ease.



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"Oh, whilst I think of it and it is fresh in my mind, I must tell you of something that occurred today," said Thelda. "Remember my telling you of a pretty girl who comes to the 'lunch parlor' and who works at Macy's?"

"Yes, the one who told you you always looked so 'tony like the swells,' because you always wore plain suits and hats."

"That's the one. By the by, she has an exact replica of my present costume, even down to my plain silver links, and as we are told, 'imitation is the sincerest flattery' I accept it as a compliment. Well, she asked me if she could talk to me a few moments, about four,—she wanted my advice, so of course I said yes; she came in at that time, having got off for the remainder of the day at the store; now this is her news.—She is going to marry a young fellow who works in a large wholesale place as foreman, and she wanted to know if I could tell her where she could learn something about housekeeping and cooking, for it seems that all of her life since she was a small girl has been passed in shops, first as cash girl, then behind the counter; and the people with whom she has lived, some distant relatives, do not live in the way Carrie approves. She has, it seems, a most marked domestic leaning, says that she always has planned some day to have a nice little home and always wanted to know how to cook and make things, so now her wish is to be fulfilled.

The man is steady and earns two-and-a-half a day, has saved four hundred dollars, and they do not see any reason to wait any longer.

She has been getting ready a small outfit of table and bed linen, and has bought a machine and a set of books,—'The Library of Choice Literature',—five pictures and a clock, an easel, a mantel-drape and a pair of portieres, on the installment plan. These are all paid for, so we consulted as to ways and means, and I told her of the new Holding Building and its pretty little flats of two

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and three rooms, and advised her to go and see Mary Tobin at the settlement house and ask to join her house-keeping class. As she seemed a trifle shy I said I would go with her to both places on Sunday. She is as pretty as a peach and looks lovely, now that she has left off her feathered hats and enameled and rhinestone combs.

We will go first to see Mary, then I told her to ask her John to meet us at the buildings, and look at the flats with us."

"Oh, how jolly, I wish I could go along," said Miriam, "won't it be fun to see them settle; did she take you into her confidence about the furniture? I suppose she will have a parlor, with a 'set' in brocatelle, each piece of a different color; and can't you just see it all, the drape probably of peacock blue plush with fringe, or an embroidered one done in large-as-life roses on a magenta ground! The clock will be gilt and onyx under a globe; and the pictures,—'The Huguenot Lovers,' 'Beatrice Cenci,' 'Alone at Last,' and a yard of violets in elaborate white and gold frames. The easel will hold an enlarged crayon of 'him' with an India silk drape festooned over it, and the portieres will be chenille, in a pattern of yellow, green and blue lozenges on a tan ground; oh, lovely!"

They all laughed as Phœbe finished.

"I am not so certain," replied Thelda, "any girl who has the good taste to give up cheap finery for simplicity, and thinks it 'the dead swell thing,' as she expressed it, may be inspired to buy a different class of home furnishings; however, I shall be able to tell you Sunday evening, for I promised to go up to her room and see her possessions."

"I've had an experience today, too," said Miriam. "Do you remember that Mrs. Hemingway we used occasionally to meet at Belle English's, before her marriage?"

"The big woman with the look of 'The Roman Matron'

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saying adieu to her sons on the eve of battle?" asked Thelda. "Yes, what of her, I never liked her."

"Well, she has lost all her money, and with it the look you speak of, and now is quite humanly human, poor thing, and has opened a boarding-house on Seventy-first Street; two of our customers board with her and say that she is having a struggle to get on, and just this afternoon I met her on the Sixth Avenue car and she was so glad to see me, I felt quite repentant for all my criticism of her in the past. It was evidently the psychological moment, when she must unbosom to someone or burst—and she unbosomed to me. She has taken too expensive a house; it costs too much to run it, so that she has to charge too high prices, and so she can not fill it and sees her little reserve fund melt away.

I told her I thought that if she would take a house in a much less expensive neighborhood and ask moderate prices, giving good value in return, her troubles would vanish; for there are quantities of people who would like to find a boarding-house that was clean, with good table, and that seemed 'homey,' and yet who could not pay exorbitant prices.

She said that she could dispose of her lease readily, and when I left her she seemed quite cheered up. She condoled with me over our loss of dollars, and I told her that we would not go back to the old life for anything; that we were all agreed that we had not been more than half awake before to life's possibilities for interest and fun and happiness.

I told her of our new interest, the settlement work, and when I mentioned the Holdings and she found that the Doctor was the son of old Ezra Holding, the multi-millionaire, and Martha was the cousin of Belle, she was too surprised for words. Funny she had never heard of them from the English's, wasn't it? Anyway I have given her some new possibilities to think of, poor thing. She likewise congratulated me upon Bliss's good mar-



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riage! Dollars again, how much nine-tenths of the world seem to think of money!"

Sunday evening Thelda was late for supper, so they went on with the meal without her and had about finished when she came in.

"I saved some supper for you, dear," said Honor, as she helped her take off her jacket and hat.

"Oh, thanks, honey, but I'm full up to my very chin, and I have had just the jolliest time! Let the dishes go for awhile, girls, and listen.—

I went with Carrie O'Brien to see Mary, and Carrie told her little story. Mary was as pleased as Punch, the kind thing, and entered into Carrie's plans as though they were her own. Every day for a fortnight Carrie is to go to the housekeeping class and by the end of that time Mary assures her that she will know enough to get at least a week's meals properly. Then, after she is married, she is to continue going until she has finished her course. You know they have at the settlement worked out a really wonderful lot of menus, minimum cost, maximum nourishment and attractiveness, just suited to slim purses; and Mary is so interested in pretty Carrie's romance, that she will be additionally painstaking in helping her with the housekeeping struggle.

Then we went to the buildings, where we met John who was looming large and shy in the doorway and who gave me such a grip as Carrie introduced us, that my fingers are numb yet.

There are only two flats empty, and they decided upon the three-room one on the top floor; the cunningest little place, and as convenient as a yacht, which it strongly resembles. Every inch of space is utilized, and it was very pretty to watch Carrie's joy in the place. At each discovery, she got pinker of cheek and brighter of eye. And the big, clumsy, kind looking fellow looked like an elephant in the tiny rooms.

Then, after it was decided that it was "just the sweet-

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est ever," I introduced them to the janitor; and Carrie and I said goodbye to John and went to see the treasures.

The neighborhood was a rough one and we fell over old women in the doorway and babies, in all stages of mussiness, on the stairs.

Carrie said,—“Poor little things, half of them don't get any care to speak of,” and she stopped to pat and speak to a dozen. Evidently the maternal instinct is well developed. We climbed and climbed and finally on the top floor reached our destination, and as Carrie opened the door our nostrils were assailed by such a gush of steaming dinner, tobacco smoke and beer that I gasped. The room was clean and comfortable, though evidently kitchen and sitting-room. A good natured, fat old Irish woman and a tall, thin old Irishman were introduced as ‘My Uncle Mat and my Aunt Mary.’ They beamed upon me cordially.

Carrie led me into a room adjoining, which was hers, and I was never so amazed in my life, it was cool and pretty and *really* nice. You remember, Phœbe, what you prophesied as to the probable furnishings of the flat, don't you?”

Phœbe nodded.

“Well, it's guess again. There was a pretty matting on the floor, a plain green paper on the walls, and the pictures were in dark oak frames and were *all* etchings and in excellent taste.

The easel held what was evidently the treasure, and it was that charming ‘Madame le Brun and Child’ in sepia. The portieres were two-toned green. The mantel-drape was a straight piece of some green and gold stuff, really pretty. The clock was one of those round crystals, held by a small bronze dragon. Her bed was a box-couch, so that in the day time there was no look of a bedroom about the place, as she kept her toilet articles in a chest of drawers, and when she showed me how out of sight they

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could be, I saw that her brush and comb were clean and she even had a simple little manicure set.

There were two chairs, both rattan, with cushions. I was so dumfounded I could not speak, then I found my voice and I praised,—well! I *think* I did.

She, it seems, has been an ardent reader of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Woman's Home Companion*, and copied, where she could, the arrangements of her little room; and besides the 'Choice Literature Set,' she has a number of other books, mostly poetry, and several bound volumes of her standbys, the L. H. J.'s, and W. H. C's., as she calls them. Oh, and I must not forget the afternoon-tea table; it has everything complete down to a cracker jar, a small brass kettle and a spirit lamp, and I had tea with her.

Talk of the adaptability of woman! Here was this pretty Irish girl, who has had the slenderest education, whose whole life had been spent in a shop, yet who has managed to acquire a knowledge of what prettiness and daintiness may be attained, and whose taste has been cultivated simply by seeing, observing and reading.

After we had talked over the prospective home and the furnishings, the old woman came in and insisted upon my having Sunday dinner with them, and I stayed. It was heaps of fun and the dinner was good. Pork and cabbage, dumplings, baked potatoes and gravy, and rice pudding.

They're the nicest old couple and as proud of Carrie as though she were their own child.

John came in to dinner and we all got acquainted quite intimately. Oh, I would not have missed it for anything. Isn't life great fun?"

\* \* \* \* \*

The addition to the settlement house was finished and on the top floor Walter Dean had arranged a pretty suite of rooms, where the windows looked out on the harbor,



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and every breath of the ocean air came in, and the sun poured in, making things cheerful and bright.

On the first floor, easy of access, he established his office, and the poor and sick and troubled found him always ready with help of all kinds.

He, like Doctor Holding, had felt that both kinds of doctoring were needed in the chosen work, and they had gone through divinity classes and medical classes together. Big, strong, clear brained men, both filled with zeal and belief in making things better here and now. With their practical helpfulness, their cheerful views, and abundant vital interest in people, conditions and things, they were doing good work.

One late afternoon in the autumn Doctor Holding came into the other's office as the small maid brought in the tea-tray, and the two busy men grasped this short interval between duties for a talk. Finally Holding said,—

“Old boy, have you anything to tell me?”

The other flushed and laughed nervously, answering,—

“No, I cannot, somehow, get up courage to ask her. You see, it's such a change from everything that she has been reared to and it seems to me that possibly I ought not to ask a woman to join me in my life work at all, it is not fair to the woman, unless she has been and is likewise a ‘worker in the vineyard.’ Of course in your case it was different, Martha would not have given up the work, I believe, don't you?”

Holding nodded his head.

“Yes, my good fortune certainly lay in the fact that it was the chosen life work of both of us; but I tell you, old fellow, I think Honor Brenning is the one for you, and I do *not* believe that she will feel that she is making too great a sacrifice for you. Why she is head and front of the work now, and was bemoaning to Martha, only yesterday, that their flat was so far away from the settlement.”

“Was she?” asked Dean, sitting erect, whilst his

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strong face lost its look of discouragement, and the usual boyish drollery that so endeared him to his patients shone forth.

"Jolly! I'll ask her to take a look at my rooms, and tell me if there is anything further they need, and—and—maybe if she seems to like them, I can get up courage enough to ask her to marry me and live in them with me,—but maybe her sisters will object."

"Oh, maybe your grandmother!" laughed Holding, "the girls are the nicest, most sensible lot I ever knew, and are you for an instant laboring under the impression that this is going to give them a shock of surprise? You can pretty safely count on their having realized the situation before you did, all but Honor. I really don't believe she does yet, but you can easily find out. When will you show her over your place?"

"Well, I think tomorrow, if she comes down, but oh, I say Holding, I really feel sort of scared—the fact that I am one of these people by birth and upbringing——"

——"Oh, bother, man! that you have made of yourself what you have, considering that fact, is worth everything in the way of character. Women, that is our kind of women don't care a hang who our grandfathers were, or our fathers either for that matter. Just you forget to be afraid and tell your little story and whilst you're telling it do not try to look as though you were an escaped criminal fearing immediate arrest," said Holding laughingly, as he went out.

The following evening Honor was late for supper and Nalton was looking out of the window when the others heard her exclaim, then laugh, and she turned towards them a second after, her face flushed and her eyes dancing.

"Well, talk of being unconventional! Walter Dean has just kissed Honor in the full blaze of the corner light, before the eyes of a newsboy, two old men, a woman *and* the janitor."

"Nalton!"

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“ ’Tis a fact, I saw it!”

“Well, evidently he has proposed and been accepted,” said Thelda. Goody! dear old Hon deserves her happiness and he’s just the brother-in-law I would have picked out, and won’t it be larks to go and see them up in sky-heaven, and be right in all the settlement doings?”

The door opened and Honor came in. The girls surrounded her and took off hat and jacket, overshoes and leggings, while they all talked at once.

“Oh, Hon, we’re so glad, when is it to be? Isn’t he a dear! Are you going to live in the new apartment?”

Honor flushed hotly, and said in amaze,—

“Why, how did you know? How could you? It’s just this afternoon happened, and we have not told a soul.”

“Oh, you blessed, you!” laughed Nalton, giving her a hug. “Why, we’ve all known for ages that it was coming and I just saw ‘the Dean’ kiss you goodbye so naturally, we knew we were to have another wedding in the family.”

After they had talked it all over and Honor had told their plans, she said with a slight tremble in her sweet voice,—

“It seems selfish of me, girls, to go away and leave you.”

“Now honey, just get that out of your head instant! You’re not going to leave us anyway, as far as that goes, we shall see you almost daily and we are looking forward to having a ‘vested interest’ in that absorbing work—you will be the ‘v. i.’ ”

“Oh,” sighed Phoebe, “do you suppose there are any more such men, for if there are I speak first for one.”

“I say, Hon,” Miriam queried, “this having so many adoring sisters-in-law will be rather overwhelming, won’t it? Do you suppose he is quite properly appreciative of the situation?”

Honor smiled happily,—“Yes, he thinks it is charming; you know he has never had any near ones—an or-



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phan, supposedly, left to scramble through life. Oh, girls, I listen to him in sheer wonderment when I realize what he has accomplished, and feel additionally tender to every ragged, dirty, little atom of humanity, just because of Walter; and to think of having struggled out of it all and up, and when life could have been filled with all that is generally thought to be most worth while, turning his back and going back to the slums! He says that he finds the memories of his own boyhood and its struggles give him understanding of these lives as nothing else can, and you know his boys' classes are getting on wonderfully. I am very happy, girls."

As there was no reason for delay, the wedding took place a month later, held in the old Hall that had been the scene of Martha Farrish's wedding five years before, and under very similar conditions. The guests,—aside from the girls, Martha and her husband, and the other workers,—being the people of the quarter, to whom this young couple were already dear, and who felt a keen sense of appropriation in them. Then, after a short trip, they settled down in the new home which had been made pretty and comfortable.

Bliss wrote lovingly, and if she felt any slightest disappointment in her sister's choice, she hid it perfectly so that there was no cloud to mar Honor's happiness.

It had been decided that Nalton should go on with the dancing-class, taking an assistant, an old girl friend who found herself in the need of earning her living.

At the flat the girls kept on as they had been and often seeing Honor as they did, and being themselves as active workers as their time permitted in the settlement crafts school and small social doings, there was no sense of loss; and to each, life was bringing so much through their various activities and individual interests that there was never time to grow dull or lonely.

One afternoon, as Thelda was balancing her cash preparatory to leaving for home, the door of the lunch par-

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lor opened and a tall woman entered and came toward the desk.

"Sorry, ma'am, but we are just closing for the day," said a waitress to her.

"Yes, I know, I only want to see Miss Brenning," she answered.

At the sound of the deep contralto Thelda looked up and half rose from her seat, then exclaimed, gladly,—

"Theodocia?" and went quickly to meet her.

"Yes, Theodocia, you small, irreverent person, when I last saw you, you had your hair in pigtails, and addressed me with much greater deference." And the tall woman stooped to kiss the upturned face.

"I'm just from seeing Martha and Honor, Mary T., and the small Duchess, and considering I only escaped from the clutches of the customs people at twelve, and it's but five now, I think I deserve a medal. Honor said if I caught you 'to beg a supper.' I want to see the other girls, may I go home with you?"

"Indeed you may," replied Thelda, feeling suddenly small, young, inexperienced and a bit shy before the handsome, grizzled-haired woman whose history had been so wonderful and who had been such a power in her small world, that though years had elapsed since her departure her name was as much a thing to conjure with as when she lived amongst them.

They took a car, and Theodocia, sensing Thelda's shyness, talked on of her trip, her fellow passengers, of the 'chums' left behind in Europe, of many things,—clever, witty talk, pictures of people and events. And when the wonderful deep voice finally ceased, and the quizzical big, gray eyes looked down into Thelda's brown ones the latter drew a deep breath and snuggled closer, saying,—

"Oh, don't stop talking, I could listen all night."

Theodocia gave her an approving pat and laughed.

"Nice girl! and you will probably get your wish, for I've so much to tell and ask that I can foresee that we

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shall make a night of it, but is not the next corner where we get off? I have to get to the door before the car stops, so as not to keep impatient conductors waiting, as I can not well explain that one of my nether limbs is a product of the artificial doctor's art, can I?"

After supper Martha, Honor, Mary T. and Anna Dean came in, and they all gathered about Theodocia.

There was so much to say that when the two husbands came at eleven to claim the truant wives, but a small part had been said, and they planned to meet at the settlement house for tea on the following Sunday, and bring things up to date.

Theodocia went home with Mary and Anna to the settlement house where there was a room ready for her.

Amongst the volunteer teachers in the free crafts night school was a big German of socialistic tendencies and great erudition, a man of whom nothing was known beyond the fact that he had been a Heidelberg student in his youth, was of good family, and for some reason had elected to leave certain position in Germany and come to America, where he practised the trade of bookbinding and interested himself greatly in the settlement work, giving nearly a third of his time to the work in the evening classes. He was a devout follower of the William Morris school of thought and work, and was very genuinely liked by all. His big booming bass voice was heard at all of the musical evenings, and besides he taught a class in singing and violin, being far and away beyond the amateur in his work along those lines.

Nalton had been helping in his music-class, playing accompaniments, and sometimes when the other sisters were not there to return home with her, Professor, as he was called by them all, would see her to the door. She had protested at first, for it would be late and she remembered the long trip back to where he lived near the mission, but as he said it was a rest and he always, in all weathers prowled about until after midnight, she ceased



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to protest. They were very companionable, and the talks of the work at the settlement, his plans for further work, his interest in the people and great belief in the future possibility for growth and betterment of them and their conditions, and his sunny optimism which nothing could down, were to her a great delight, and they discussed life in all of its bearings and found it good.

Nalton told him of their life, hers and her sisters', of the good old uncle who had done so much for them and intended doing so much more, when death cut off all possibility of achievement; and then of their life since their facing the world and becoming wage earners, whilst his deep voice boomed an occasional "Lieber Gott, ach! sehr gut!" And he told her in return, of his boyhood, passed in a great somber old *Schloss*, amidst old people steeped in family traditions, family pride in the old race and name; of his series of tutors, who had given the proverbial intellectual stone to the boy eager for the bread of life; of his final Heidelberg years of wild student rioting; of the death of the old great-aunt and uncle who had brought him up, and of his final achievement of his liberty. How, for years, he had travelled, read, studied men, conditions and countries, had slowly but certainly reached the conclusion, life being the struggle it was to nine-tenths of the world's people, that it behooved men such as he, who had attained to a clear vision of what was necessary to create greater equality, to enter the ranks of the workers, and that to do good, actual, tangible good it was necessary to identify himself with the people who were making the struggle: to work with his hands, living amongst them in equality of condition; and as amongst his various gifts was the gift of craftsmanship and book-binding in all of its branches, a thoroughly studied and practised employment, he had selected that as his trade, his sign of brotherhood. He had realized thoroughly that only in some way that could be seen and understood of the people, could he work. Any slightest sign of de-

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marcation between them and him, such as there must be were he to earn his living along intellectual lines, would fail of the result. So he had rented a small shop, fitted it up with the tools of the trade, adopted the dress and outward signs of the worker, and so got into touch with his adopted environment.

He lived in two small rooms back of the shop, and as simply as the poorest of the quarter. He had now been there two years and the people knew him, saw that he worked as hard as any of them, lived as poorly, and they gave him their confidence, recognizing in a dim way that he was superior, but feeling no distrust of that superiority, as he was a worker.

Many of the boys in the quarter he had influenced to join the crafts classes, believing that given an interesting employment for hands and brain, the restlessness of spirit, the misdirection of energy that so often results in ruin, mentally, spiritually and physically, might be averted.

Gradually he had converted his two rooms into a home. As he came across things rare, beautiful and interesting during his prowls amongst small dingy shops, he had bought them, always making some sacrifice to do it. Had then used them as object lessons to his pupils, giving them thus pleasantly the knowledge of bigger, broader worlds, of arts, of people. A set of old vellum bound books unearthed from the depths of a dark, small shop, which were good examples of the printing, binding and engraving of their time (1690) had been the subject of a series of talks relative to the discovery of printing, the various schools of bookbinding, the art of etching on copper, steel and wood. At the end of the talks he had taken the classes one day up to the Museum to see an exhibit of old books, missals and manuscripts.

A piece of old Nankin china had been productive of long and interesting talks, which brought in so much of geography, history, manners and customs, besides the

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condensed account of pottery-making from its inception to the present time, and necessitated so much consulting of maps, looking up books of reference and viewing collections by the intensely interested lads, that an entire winter had slipped by, and so had he led them on until his class had grown far too big for the room and the large hall had been given up to it.

All of these things were not told during one or two or a dozen home-goings, but by the time they all had been told Nalton and the Professor had learned to know each other well: and the other workers were lifting amused and interested eyebrows.

Phœbe said to Miriam and Thelda one day, as they sat at table waiting for Nalton to arrive,—

“Well, girls, it looks to me as though our ‘vested interest’ in the settlement work was going to be increased, and pretty soon we shall be sitting three at table. When that time comes, I move we pick up sticks and go down town. This is altogether too far away from the v. i.’s. I’ve had my eye on a row of old houses, any one of which we could get rooms in I’m sure. They are about the last of ‘old New York,’ and possibly the drains may be wrong and certainly the houses would crumble into dust should there be an earthquake shock, but we can stop up drains and take chances on the ‘quakes,’ for they are ducky old places, with long, narrow gardens in front, front balconies to each story, and any quantity of vines and ivy climbing about, and it’s not more than fifteen minutes’ walk from Honor and the others. What do you say?”

“I, for one, say yes,” said Miriam, whilst Thelda was silent and looked absorbedly into the teapot.

“Well!” queried Phœbe of her.

She started and blushed and said finally,—

“Why, girls, I have something to tell you and—and —”

“Oh, go ahead, honey,” said Miriam, “we won’t eat



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you! Don't you approve of the old house with its probable bad drains and general crumbliness?"

"Oh, it's not that, but—but—oh well, I have promised to marry Harry Miller."

There was a moment's pause, then Phœbe and Miriam simultaneously rose and solemnly kissed her.

She laughed nervously and said,—

"I wanted to tell you long ago, but I dreaded you would tease so, as Harry had always been thought of as heart broken over Bliss's marriage, and somehow I felt rather silly."

"My dear, you are the most sensible small person I know and when the others know of this there will be great rejoicing," said Phœbe, whilst Miriam hugged her again, "but oh, I say, Miriam, now look me straight in the eye, have you got a husband up your sleeve, and am I to be the only one who is to move into the 'old house?' I can stand it, I suppose, but really, I would like to know definitely, it makes it a trifle easier to plan."

Miriam and Thelda laughed and Miriam replied,—

"Nary a one, dear. It looks to me as though we are to be the 'bachelors' of the family, and do the devoted 'maiden aunties' act. Here comes Nalton, I hear her coming up the stairs; put in the hot water Phœbe and bring in the salad whilst I dish the chicken. The dear's probably famished. I don't notice that any of you lose much appetite to speak of, if you *are* in love."

Nalton came in somewhat timidly and replied to the others' questions in an embarrassed way.

Phœbe, who was pouring the tea, looked sharply at her a minute, then set the pot on its rest and leaning back in her chair, said,—

"Well, Nallie girl, when do we get our bridesmaids' dresses?"

Nalton gasped and the others laughed.

"Truly child, you must think we are all deaf and dumb and qualifying for weakmindedness. So you

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thought the big August's intentions were discreetly veiled—talk of ostriches! I wonder!"

As Nalton's eyes filled with tears, Thelda got up and went over to her,—

"Don't mind, honey, I've just had to submit to about the same thing." And as Nalton looked at her inquiringly,—“Yes, I'm going to marry Harry, so we'll make it a double wedding and divide this family attention.”

“Oh, I'm so glad, Thelda! Dear old Hal, how nice to think he will be one of us,” said Nalton, tenderly.

“I think,” remarked Phœbe, dryly, “that whilst all this congratulating is going on, there might be a bit of condolence given to the ones of us who are to be left. How do you suppose it is going to seem for Miriam and me to have to face each other week in and week out, three times a day, over a tiny table, after there has been always such a lot of us? Mimi, we'll have to set up a cat and parrot.”

And so the slight tension of the moment was relieved by laughter, and they talked quite happily over the various plans.

Theodocia's visit of a month had lengthened into five, but now she definitely decided to return to Paris, where the chums were waiting for her and from whence came bushels of letters, all urging her return, and she was only delaying until after Nalton's wedding to the Professor and Thelda's to Harry Miller.

The women sat late one afternoon in Mary's room, talking over times past and present and wondering over the future, when, after a moment's pause in the talk, Phœbe said,—

“Theodocia, what a wonderful life you have led, have you not?”

Theodocia glanced at her and getting up went over to the fire-place, where she stood looking down into the coals, finally answering,—

“Yes, wonderful! I have written it all down, and I've

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tried to be perfectly honest with myself, and I shall send it to you sometime. It will be just for you women whom I love. I know you want to understand a number of things that you are puzzled about, and I want that you should." Then, abruptly, "How old do you think I am, girls?"

"No one answered for a moment, then Mary answered,—

"Truly, Theo, I have no idea, you don't look a minute older than you did when I first saw you and that was——

——"Fifteen years ago," supplemented Theodocia, as the other paused.

"Was it that long ago? Yes, of course, so it must have been."

"Well, that does not answer the question; what do you say, Martha, you're a very literal person and one can feel certain of the absolute truth in your statements. The rest of them seem afraid to tackle the question."

"You are about forty-five," answered Martha.

Theo lifted her brows—

"I won't retract what I said as to your truth-telling, because you evidently believe what you say, but my respect for your judgment from now on is gone. Any other guess coming? Come, this begins to be interesting. Do you women mean to tell me that you have not amongst you given me an age? Well, that is amazing! How do you account for it?"

"Goodness' sake! Theo, who ever thinks of your age? It's you one thinks of," said Mary. The rest nodded,—

"Yes, that's it exactly."

Theo whistled. "Well, I am fifty-six years old." And seeing the blank amazement on their faces, she laughed mischievously, "Honor bright, fifty-six on the ninth of last September."

"I don't believe a word of it, it's too absurd, why even with your gray hair you don't look forty," said Honor, "of course she's teasing."



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"No, I'm not, it's the naked truth, and an account of the greater part of those fifty-six years is on paper and you're going to have it to read within the next year."

It was decided that Nalton and her professor should take one of the apartments in the buildings, where they would be convenient to the settlement and amongst the people for whom they were working. Their neighbors would be Martha and her family, and little Carrie O'Brien, who was now a matron of standing in the quarter, being a most excellent housekeeper and making her big John the envied of all his bachelor friends. There had recently come a small John to the home and Carrie was religiously putting into practice all of her acquired knowledge of the care of babies, and being the earnest person she was the small John was nearly scraped and scrubbed out of existence. She kept her little home a miracle of cleanliness and prettiness, and found time to attend several of the settlement classes more or less regularly. Her example of cheerful thrift was of great value to the young couples who are contemplating matrimony.

The double wedding took place at the flat, and after a most rollicking breakfast,—for everyone was happy over the event,—the two couples left for a two weeks' trip to the Adirondacks where Harry Miller owned a most delightful camp.

On their return, Thelda would go to the big old Madison Avenue house where the Millers had lived for three generations, and Nalton to the toy flat at the top of the big model tenement.

The day after the weddings, Miriam and Phœbe moved into their new quarters, in the corner house of the row that Phœbe lost her heart to, and fitting it up with the pretty things that were left after the general distribution, settled down to home-keeping.

There were a number of art students in the house, and a jolly, happy, sociable lot they were, who called on them the second day of their arrival.

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There was a landlady, whom they recognized as a character, immediately, and who took them to her heart, and a week after their arrival they were all as well acquainted as though they had known each other for years, so that any feeling of loneliness that might well have come to them when their family was reduced to two was conspicuous by its absence. And it was soon a recognized custom that the sisters should gather over the Sunday tea-table at the "henery" as it was called because there were so many women there. Husbands and friends left them undisturbed to talk of affairs, ask and give advice, and be happy together.

Bliss had returned and often joined the others, but although she was the same soft, loving Bliss, her position was different and its responsibilities as the wife of a wealthy man, whose interests, politically and socially were increasing, left her scant leisure for the Sunday afternoon meetings.

That the marriages of Honor and Nalton had been and were a thorn in the flesh of her husband was felt by the others, but as Bliss was happy and apparently as filled with affection for the girls as ever, she made it very easy for them to regard their brother-in-law's disapproval with indifference.

One Sunday when they had gathered at the "henery," Miriam said,—

"Girls, it's just three years since we faced our altered circumstances. Have we ever regretted the old days, or been unhappy in the new conditions?"

"Not I, for one," answered Phœbe.

"Not any of us," answered Honor, and as Nalton filled the last cup from the squatty pot that had been one of their treasures brought from the old home,—

"Let us drink a toast to Life—good old Life—so full of possibilities for those who are willing to go even a little way towards meeting them."







## The Diary of a "Shut-in"



OV. 20TH,—It has come to the point where I must look my position squarely in the face. I have been cowardly and put it off from day to day.

Here am I, Hilda Martin, aged forty-two, income fifty-odd dollars a month, no relations nearer than Scotland and those forty-second cousins! Suddenly, without warning, in a second, changed from an active, busy woman, earning what for a woman is a large income, into a woman condemned for the remainder of life to a thing called a "bed-couch" *and* fifty-odd.

After the first horror of the thing was over, I think probably I was numb, had suffered so terribly that everything but mere physical pain seemed not to count, but now, after ten months in the hospital, am as well as I shall ever be, and the numbness has gone from my mind. Everyone has been as kind as could be to me, but ten months is a long time and life is short and for the few I know a thing of considerable stress, so that visitors have dwindled until now about the only one who comes often is kind old Jimmy Wise—funny that! And he comes and plays to me and reads to me, although now I can read to myself again I'd much rather talk with him. I find I like to hear all of the little gossip and tittle-tattle; it's all of interest to me since my world has dwindled to four walls. Here I keep on chatting, instead of facing my problem; said problem is, how to arrange my life so that I need be of no trouble to anyone, and do that on my limited income.

Mrs. Nosey,—Ye Gods! what a name!—is the kindest thing and has agreed to let me have this corner front room of hers on the first floor for a year in exchange for

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the furnishings of my old apartment, I keeping enough to furnish this room, and by so doing she will be able to furnish four rooms and rent them.—Poor soul, but she has had a hard time!—So for one year I shall be able to save more than I shall spend.

I forgot to put down the fact that every morning she is to give me my bath and straighten things for me. The remainder of the time I must look out for myself. I find that I can do a lot for myself by the aid of the little “helps for helplessness” that Jimmy has rigged up. I can wheel my chair about the room and I can actually dust a bit, and arrange a bit.

There is an open grate in my room and by being very careful I can have a fire on these cold days.

As I look about me and recognize the familiar books and pictures, the embroideries and the brasses, my heart gets very warm.

The doctor said that in the spring I might have my chair out-of-doors on the sidewalk. That will be fun, but how to get it out there will be a problem. However, as it's only the very beginning of winter I need not worry over what will be in the spring.

Nov. 21st,—I stopped yesterday because Mrs. Nosey came in, and, saying that she would stay a moment, stayed an hour and a half. She is full of the subject of her lodgers and their ways. One in particular seems to have won her heart. He is the “top floor back,” looks delicate and is a musician. Poor, evidently,—second or third violin in the orchestra of one of the small theatres. She says he “fends for himself” and is as neat as an old maid about everything and always has a pleasant word for her.

Then there is an elderly man who is evidently a character and looks like Santa Claus. Mrs. Nosey thinks he has seen better days and is “quite the gentleman.”

There is a lame girl who works in a feather factory,

## *THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"*

and there is a woman whom Mrs. N. seems to entertain suspicions of. I listened with decided interest. I never thought I should come to back-stair gossip, but I find myself feeling an interest in everything and anything.

To-day the sky is lead color and there is a cold wind blowing. I have been for the last hour watching the passers-by. I am so glad that this is a busy quarter and that I can get glimpses of activity outside my little room.

Miss Tobin came in just as I was getting my tea ready and we had a nice talk. She is such a splendid, strong, kind woman and she approves of my intention of doing just as much for myself as possible and keeping up an interest in things, instead of drifting into the sort of hopeless, helpless invalidism, but as I told her, it is greatly a matter of temperament. Nothing short of sheer physical suffering can down me long. I am evidently of the "bob up serenely" type.

I showed her how I had things so that I could get my own meals. Jimmy has rigged me up the most convenient little kitchenette, all in a space of three feet by five; I can wheel my chair up to it and there at hand is everything necessary.

I told Mary Tobin how I had systematized things and she said it was no wonder I had been so successful with my work before my accident, and only wished she could get a little of that quality into her classes.

After we had had our tea and she had gone, as I sat at the window in the dusk watching the lights come out in the windows and stalls and the people go hurrying by in the cold grayness, I thought of a scheme by which, by and by, I may be able to earn a little money, so that I can get books occasionally and put by a bit.

Am awfully grateful for this little income I have and now that the hideous pain is over (and the doctor says that it probably is) I can find it in my heart to pick up my senses again, and see what I can do with my life.

I had a Stevenson mood on today and read a good num-



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ber of my favorites. *Will o' the Mill* just seemed to fit my mood, which had a good bit of *Weltschmerz* in it for a while, that I positively shall not allow myself to give way to.

I saw the "top floor back" this morning: he has a fine face and *does* look delicate and he was altogether too thinly dressed for this very "forard" weather. Evidently he is poor and I suppose a struggling genius. That he is a gentleman it is very plain to see by his manner to poor Nosey, whom he treats as though she were a duchess.

Mary Tobin asked me if I wanted the prettiest thing in the way of a small doggie that ever was seen, and I said Yes, I just did, if it was trained and would not make Nosey any trouble. It is one that some friends of hers own, and as they are going away to California and cannot take it with them, they want to give it away. It is a little, inky black, toy terrier. I spoke to Nosey and she said "to be sure, Mrs. Martin, it will be real company for you." Most lodging-house keepers would have frowned upon such a suggestion.

Nov. 29TH,—Have had such a nice week. It has been quite filled with occurrences of interest. First Mary Tobin brought me the doggie, such a dear! no bigger than a pint pot, and with the blackest and silkiest hair, long and quite wavy. Her name is Midget, called Midge, and she is the sharpest, smartest little mite, took to me immediately and now seems as much at home as though she had always been here.

The day before Thanksgiving I had an attack of the blues. I could not help contrasting things as they are with things as they were and I just had to pull myself together with a good round turn. I decided that Nosey and I should have our Thanksgiving dinner together and ask the nice "top floor back" to join us. I had met and talked with him a couple of days before. It happened

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this way. I had left the door into the hall open for Midge, and someone opened a door somewhere else, so that there was a draught, and my door blew wide open with a bang, just as he came down the stairs with his violin case and music roll, and as he looked up at the open door Midge proceeded to do a war dance at his feet, barking like mad. I called to Midge, he saw me in my chair, raised his hat and smiled and I smiled back at him; then while he spoke of Midge and was admiring her, Nosey came along and introduced us. I saw him glance about with an expression of amaze, and presently he went.

When I decided to have a Thanksgiving spread I thought I'd risk a rebuff and invite him, for his face was so sad and I thought his eyes looked lonely. So I sent a little note asking him if he wanted to do an act of kindness? If he did, to come and help eat a small, but very fat turkey, baked sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce and plum pudding,—all of Nosey's cooking, and she is a right royal cook,—and after to play me something, as it had been months since I had heard any good violin music and I was fairly starved for it.—That last, I fancy, did the business and we had the jolliest kind of a time, whilst the snow and sleet and hail drove in sheets against the windows.

'Tis going to be a long hard winter, commencing, as it has, so early. God help the very poor. From my southwest window I can see a part of two streets and along one there are some fruit, vegetable, macaroni and oil shops, along the other some of the old fine houses of the days of early New York, the last left I fancy, and they are mostly turned into the workshops of the many small trades that flourish so in a great city, so I see the work people passing to and from their work, and I see the housewives of the quarter doing their small marketing, all of which is of great interest to me.

I forgot to say how I did enjoy the music on Thanks-

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giving night. Mr. Vail entertained us for an hour and, after playing everything I asked for, finally played some lovely things that he said a friend composed. I feel certain that they are his own. It did my heart good to see how he enjoyed his dinner and his evening, and we all parted the best of friends. Dear old Nosey quite came out and told us of her girlhood days spent in a little Welsh village, of her father, the village doctor, of her rides with him over the rough mountain roads on his visits to patients. I told of my queer upbringing and a little of my life, not much, but enough so that I might seem to be doing my share. Mr. Vail gave us a sketch of his boyhood: brought up in the heart of the Rockies by a queer, silent, embittered father, knowing no other companionship until his twentieth year but the rough miners of the district, living a studious life, books and music making his world. Then of his father's sudden death and his finding that there was a small income assured to him; his determination to see the world and hear the great musicians, see the great pictures and feel for once the "pulse of humanity." Then of his three years' travel, from farthest east to farthest west, from north to south, until in his mind and on his heart were clearly marked the world boundaries and humanity's outlook. Following that, five hard studious years under the "great man" and his discovery that his gift, whilst a true one, yet missed the divine spark; and then, whilst that knowledge bit deep into heart and soul and for awhile nearly drove him to desperation, came the news of the loss of his small patrimony, and the necessity to earn his living. I guess that simple as his wants are, he yet finds it difficult always to supply them, owing to the lack of the practical in his make-up. And I think he forgets his necessity for earning in his passion for composing, and so often loses pupils and opportunities.

I think that dear old Jimmy would like him. They are so absolutely opposite in temperament, yet have such



## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

similar tastes. I find that generally a safe basis for friendship.

DEC. 6TH,—Martha Holding has just gone. She brought one of those blessed cherubs to see me, and Midge, who usually hides behind the valance of the couch at the sight of a child and is deaf to threats or coaxings, went voluntarily to little Theo and the child sat holding the small thing as quietly as could be the entire time.

Martha says that they are working over the plans of another apartment house and every one who has a suggestion to make anent convenience or comfort or beauty, is asked to make it. This one is not for a family one, but for the unmarried,—for the girls and women who have to work long hours and must be in the city, yet who crave a little home, if it is only one room. So each apartment is to have a tiny kitchenette and a bed-sitting-room, and a clothes closet and a shower closet: and for those who want to club together and keep house there are to be apartments of several rooms. On each floor there will be public bathrooms where, by paying two cents, they can get hot tubs. Then there will be comfortable reading rooms and lots of small, pretty reception rooms, and a very large parlor.

There are to be no rules of any sort. It is to be just what any apartment hotel would be. As Martha says, it is not a charitable proposition, but simply to give women and girls who work hard a chance to live in comfort, taking it for granted that they are decent. If by chance some few others drift in they won't like it and will go of their own accord.

I never have seen such sensible, kind-all-through people as the Holding Settlement lot. Oh! but I am glad I know them. Yes, Hilda, my dear, you are in great good luck. Martha said today that very shortly they expected some chums who have been living for years abroad and that she wanted me to know them. Now that's nice. I

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*am* so glad that people are beginning to treat me as though I were a responsible member of society. I confess I hate to be pitied, and it's not good for me.

Martha was amazed at the convenience of my domestic arrangements, and when I told her that most of them were Jimmy's inventions she said, "Tell Mr. Wise I want his help with some plans, will you? Why, he is the kind of man who would be invaluable. The average architect is so hidebound and opinionated, not to mention being stingy with closets, that for the kind of plans we are trying to carry out he is absolutely no good, and how he tries one's temper!"

The Duchess sent me a little book. Only about a hundred pages, but the most delightful thing to me, written by some friend of hers and only for her chums. So I shall copy it, probably all of it, if the Duchess doesn't mind, and she will not.

After Martha left I was doing up the tea things and humming to myself, when I heard a queer little noise and I turned to find Midge caught by her ribbon on the davenport arm and swinging like a tassel, almost strangled. I was so weak after I had rescued the dear thing that I fairly wept, and I realized how she had crept into my heart in just this short time, with her pretty little loving ways and quick intelligence.

Oh, dear! *how* we *do* have to pay for each joy in life. We cannot even have the affection and devotion of a wee black doggie without paying the price in anxiety and real heartache.

DEC. 17TH,—I have bought one of those Lilliputian sewing machines that one can put on a cutting-board on one's lap, if one wants to,—and I have to,—and I am busy at some flannel and serge dresses for the settlement Christmas tree. I wanted to do something for both the workers and the small fry of the district, and as that beautiful cousin of Martha's, Mrs. Bell Ferguson, had

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

sent ten bolts each of flannel and serge, I offered to make the dresses. So I am working every moment, even evenings, to get them done in time. I have the nicest little assistant, she is only about sixteen or so: the most demure small person who never speaks unless spoken to, and who looks at me with such great eyes that I wonder what they have told her of me. I think after we have had another day or so together I shall be able to break the ice, for I have asked her to have lunch with me and I can see that she is bursting to express her wonder over my small household arrangements. I think she wants to help but has been told not to, as I am eccentric and do not want to be treated as an invalid.

She is, it seems, an old protégé of Martha's and is one of a family of children whose parents died when the eldest, her sister, who brought them up, was but twelve or so. The whole family have lived for some eight years in the country with the oldest sister, who has recently married, and this girl, Alantha May (pronounced as though it were one word) is living with her sister and brother-in-law, over their shop, whilst the other children are with some neighbors in the country.

A pretty, round, chubby girl, is Alantha May, and has such red cheeks and bright eyes, and is wonderful with her needle. Her ambition is to do only fine work, but until she can get that to do she earns what she can at the other. When she comes and goes she drops the prettiest little curtsies. It is very plain that she has had a good training. I shall hope to see the sister, Mary Tobin says that she is a most remarkable person.

JAN. 1ST,—The New Year fairly commenced. Christmas week was a busy one. I worked on the dresses until I was a rag, but we got them done and sent over in time, also a hundred net popcorn mittens, bound with red and filled with popcorn. Jimmy Wise and Mr. Vail popped the corn and filled the mittens on Christmas eve.



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Jimmy came in about five o'clock and from each pocket produced a package. A bottle of oysters, a bottle of half-milk, half-cream, a tin box of crisp crackers, a pat of fresh butter and a hot apple turn-over. After Alanthia May had left, we cleared away the sewing and I set the table, which is done by lifting up a drop leaf of my kitchenette and from the drawers underneath getting out the table outfit, all of which I can do from my chair. Then Jimmy made the stew and a pot of tea and put the apple turn-over to keep warm in the Dutch oven and we drew the blue and white frill in front of the gas stove, shutting out the only ugly thing in the room, and put a vase with a bunch of Christmas berries on our table. Whilst we ate, Jimmy told me of his work, the people for whom he works and the little daily things that go to make up his life.

After that he put on one of my aprons and cleared away whilst I rested and looked into the coals, and by and by, when everything was tidied up, he opened the window for a few minutes to let the sharp cold air in and freshen us up a bit, then drew the curtain and going to the piano, played for me. With him it is as with Mr. Vail. Each has the musical gift, but just misses the something that makes for greatness. But I love to hear them. I never did care so much for the heights. The air is too rarified there—I am an earthworm, so I find the gifts of my two friends very comforting. They are so generous to me.

Jimmy was still playing that lovely Rubenstein bit, when I heard a sound just outside the door and presently the notes of a violin, and Vail, picking up the melody, threaded in and out with the most beautiful soft tones and clear staccato notes. Jimmy looked over at me with a raise of the brows and I nodded. When the duo was finished Vail opened the door and came in smiling, I introduced my geniuses and they took to each other immediately.

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

Later, as we talked of everything,—music, books, their makers, old world cities, and new world social conditions,—the two men popped corn for the Christmas mittens, so the evening was a great success.

Christmas day I paid the penalty for my too steady work and had a bad bout of pain. I will not do that again. I have learned my limit of strength and as I do not want to be a nuisance I won't again exceed. Poor Nosey, she was so frightened.

And now here it is "the front of the New Year."

I have been reading with great interest the reports of the Sunshine Society. I think I will join and ask to be put into communication with some "shut-in." Maybe I can hearten up someone. Anyway I can have a try at it. Queer thing, that, how one has to grow into a feeling of universal sympathy through personal suffering. No amount of vicarious suffering seems to do it.

JAN. 10TH,—I wrote to the secretary of the "Sunshine Club" telling her that I was a shut-in and would like it greatly if she would put me into communication with some other shut-in, preferably one who lived in the country, as I thought I might give her some new interests by telling her of city sights and doings and she could give me some whiffs of fresh, sweet country air. I got in reply, almost immediately, an address. When I realized the very out-of-the-worldness of it, I felt a lump in my throat: and the name too, was an appeal,—

THIRLA SVENINGTON,  
Wakkinco Cross Roads,  
North Dakota.

Great heaven! to be shut-in, in that land of long, bitter-winters! I had passed through that very place once on my way to visit the Baileys at their ranch home, and I remember it distinctly: a raw, small frontier town, no single thing of beauty in it and much of ugliness. So with that memory freshly resurrected in my heart, I

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wrote telling her of myself, of my accident, of my long ten months of pain, of my final semi-recovery, and of my firm intention of taking the broken thing my life had become, as a gift, and making the very best of it in every way: and begged her to tell me as frankly about herself, that we might get all that was to be got from this new relationship.

Goodness knows when I shall hear in return. She may of course live miles away from the Cross Roads, in which case, as the snow often reaches many feet in depth and the drifts grow mountain high, she may not get it for weeks,—or she may live in the town, and then I shall hear soon.

I have added another acquaintance to my list. Last evening I was sitting in the window, as is my custom when the dusk falls, with no light in my room but the firelight, that I may better see the outer world; and watching the groups of workers as they hurried past, I saw, hippity-hopping along by the aid of a crutch stick, a queer little figure, and I thought “there goes ‘Jennie Wren’; she’s probably been to try on a wedding-party.” When she came abreast of our door-steps she stopped a second, then started up the steps and it came to me that it must be the “top floor front,” the girl who works in the feather factory, so I wheeled about and over to my door, which I opened. As she entered the house and started the long climb, I said,—“Is that Miss Thorn?” “Yes. Who is it? You, Mrs. Nosey?”

“No, it is I, Hilda Martin.” “Oh!”—And I knew by the tone that she had heard of me.

“Won’t you come in and rest a moment, Miss Thorn, before that long climb?” I struck a match and lighted the drop light.

She came shyly to the door-sill and then, seeing my evident desire for her company writ large upon my countenance, she came in and I closed the door and shook hands with her.



## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

"It's a clear case of kidnapping, is it not?" I asked. "I saw you, I wanted to know you, and I waylaid you. Sit down in that low chair by the fire and get rested, and please don't think me crazy."

She laughed a nice, sweet, appreciative laugh, took the chair, and we became very well acquainted.

She is a clever little thing, not at all unlike "Jennie Wren" and I told her so, wondering if she would understand the allusion. She went off into peals of mirth, and confided to me that she had years ago given herself that very name, and only wished she were a doll's dress-maker instead of a feather worker. She is a well-read person, and before I knew it it was nearly seven o'clock, so I made her stay to supper and we had great fun. My dish was stew, which had been doing itself nicely all afternoon in the niche by the fire, covered tight so that no particle of steam could escape; she contributed crackers and cheese and a glass of jelly. Because of the occasion, I made another pot of tea although I rarely indulge in afternoon tea *and* tea for supper.

Afterwards we cleared up and as I saw her eyeing my books, I said,—“Love them?” She nodded.

I struggled manfully with myself for a moment, then I said,—

“You are welcome to borrow, if you see anything you want?”

“Thank you very much, Mrs. Martin, but I never do borrow. But I would like to look over them. I always think one's books, more than any other personal possession, show the individuality.”

“Yes, do.” And I drew a long breath.—Parenthetically, I hate to lend my books.

She has had a very unusual sort of life: A foundling, left in the cradle at the door of St. Savior's; taken at the age of five by a childless couple to bring up, who both died before she was ten years old, and whose heirs would not keep the child; back to St. Savior's, whence, at eleven,

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she was taken by a German woman and made to work like a small dray horse; then at fourteen a bad fall on ice-covered stone stairs, long months in the hospital, and the edict, lame for life; then four years of great happiness, living with a dear woman who was everything that was motherly and tender to her, who taught her her trade; at twenty alone again, by the death of the woman; and then eight years of earning her living, her only joy her books and the few hours at home in her small room.

I said,—“*How* did you become so well educated?”

“Am I? I feel wofully ignorant, but I have always read, every moment I could get to myself, and when it was possible I’ve gone to lectures at the Institute, and I suppose that has helped.”

Altogether it was a most satisfactory evening and I asked her to come down Wednesday evening to hear Jimmy and Mr. Vail play.

Mary Tobin came in,—or rather blew in, for it *was* a day—and stayed to tea on Friday, giving me an account of a new family that she has come across, Hungarians, all musicians, father, mother, two boys and a girl, well born, well educated, and now here in a strange country, the father sick unto death, the mother about to have another child, and *no* money but what the two little boys twelve and ten can earn playing on the streets.

Mary says that the Duchess really discovered the family. She was coming home one late afternoon and thought she would just step in and see Martha Holding, when at the corner she saw two little lads playing on violins, and a little girl standing next them, crying. No one paid any attention to the pathetic little group, and it was bitter cold, with a strong wind blowing. The Duchess went over to them and asked what was the matter and in stammering English they told her. First bidding them wait a moment she went into Martha’s and got a few dollars as she had but a dime with her; then

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she went with them to the room they called home. There she found the sick father and the poor distressed mother and, after promising help, she went to the nearest telephone station, called up the settlement doctor on duty, told him about the case, ordered necessities and hurried back. Presently the doctor came, there was a fire going, —fancy! there had been none before, and in this weather!—and she got a good, hot, strengthening meal, and stuffed the children to the bursting point.

After our little Duchess had done all that she could, the settlement folk took the case and now Mary Tobin is guardian angel. They are a very interesting family, she says.

Another case that Mary is interested in is a queer one. A man named Tim Burk, generally called Bully Burk, has been sent up for ten years to the Island, and he has left in Mary's charge his wife and baby. The wife never knew, until Bully Burk was caught red-handed in the Troy bank robbery, that he was not what he had told her, a travelling man for a Pittsburg firm, and she won't believe it yet, although he has been sentenced, convicted and sent to the Island. She clings to Mary like grim death. She was a country school teacher before Burk saw and fell in love with her, a pretty, gentle little woman, Mary says, very unsophisticated and simple, and it seems that Burk has been everything that was lovely to her. He told Mary with the tears running down his face that he had firmly intended to quit his ways and go into the country and buy a farm,—after the Troy bank affair. He has always wanted to be a farmer and he had picked out the place and paid all but the last installment on it. Mary said that Dr. Holding decided that he would pay that last installment and send the wife and baby there to live, and until Burk's time is up he, the Doctor, will look out for them. When Burk heard that he went all to pieces. What an interesting world it is!



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JAN. 28TH,—I had an answer to my letter from Thirla Svenington, and I think I will copy it and all the following ones as they come, into my diary, for I do not want to lose the sequence.

“JAN. —. CROSS ROADS.

MY DEAR MRS. MARTIN,

Your letter came on the heels of the most terrific snow storm that we have ever had, but owing to the fact that I am living only on the outskirts of Wakkinco, I received it but four days after its arrival.

I live with my married sister and her family, and they are everything that is kind and good to me, but my sister is a busy, hardworking, practical woman whose life is very full of the cares of a growing family, and often there come hours when I get restless.

I saw in the *Ladies' Home* the Sunshine reports and one day the thought came to me that maybe there was another “shut-in” who had occasional attacks of restlessness and wanted someone outside of the restricted circle to talk with.

You ask me to tell you all about myself, that we may know just where we stand, and so get the most from this new relationship. So here is the story:—

I am thirty-eight. Was thrown from my horse eight years ago and injured my spine so that I cannot sit up quite straight. Am quite paralyzed below the waist, but I suffer no pain now, and the doctors say that I may live for many, many years.

I have a very small income, twenty-five a month, which I give to my sister for my board, and I wish greatly it were more. I knit bushels of mittens and carloads of mufflers and wristlets, and so make a trifle extra, which buys subscriptions to half-a-dozen magazines and weeklies.

I have a corner room, one window of which looks out on a great expanse of hill and dale, and another on the County Road. I generally sit by the Road window, find-

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

ing the occasional glimpses of passing neighbors more interesting, although I love the other view.

Before my accident I was the telegraph operator at Wakkinco Junction, and I rode to my post each morning at eight and returned at six, being relieved at that time by the night operator, who lived at the Junction.

I was brought up on a cattle ranch, my father's, and when I reached fourteen years old I was sent East to an aunt's in Boston to remain four years, during which time I went to school, finishing the high school and normal course.

Then came news of my father's death and of the fact that my sister and myself were left nearly penniless, the great range having been lost by our father through some wild speculation.

Teach school I *would* not, and go into a shop I thought I *could* not. My whole heart was crying aloud for the land of my birth and free childhood. I had no desire to remain in a city. My aunt offered to keep me, but I wanted to be independent so I decided to learn telegraphy and try for some post near my old home. All of which I did, and when my accident occurred I had been for ten years in the work, less four vacations of four and six months respectively, which I spent in Europe.

My sister married just after our father's death and has stayed here for all these years. Her husband is a cattle man who was not successful for himself, and now is the manager for a great ranch.

We all live in a big, rambling, gray-shingled house, here where the wilds just touch with civilization. I have, as I said, a corner room on the first floor, and next it a bath-room, and a small veranda entirely to myself.

My sister has eight children and I love them, every one.

Our place is a sort of semi-demi-farm, that is, we grow our own garden stuff. We have chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and two cows. Have one indoor servant,

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an Indian woman, Winnie, who has been with us for many years, and a Swede for outside, who looks after the cattle and the little farming we do.

The place belongs to my sister and me, left to us by an old cousin, or rather a second cousin, of our father's, a Dane. From my name you had guessed me that, I know.

And now will that do as to description? And do you feel that you know me?

Your letter to me was a perfect godsend. Through it I felt once more in touch with the world, the real live, active world. And oh! do tell me more of Mary Tobin and Martha Holding and Jimmy Wise and all of them.

When I was well and strong I could not bear the confinement of life in a city, I felt the need of the great stretches of open all about me, but *now*—well, I somehow get at times a feeling that I wish my window looked out on a busier scene. I am grown gregarious, I want people, at any rate to watch. I thought of you at your window as 'the dusk falls and the lights spring up in shop and stall, and the people go hurrying past'—with a wee bit of envy, especially as just after your letter was received we were fairly shut off from the world by the drifts and I found myself in spirit with you.

Have you a photograph of yourself, and if so may I have it, even though but for a little visit? I try to picture you to myself and of course I have already formed a picture of you in my mind. One time, many years ago, I was at the station when the train came in and a young woman of about my own age got off. I remember yet how I stared at her. Why, I do not know, except that she was very good to look at and I had not seen anyone except the people of the village for long. She was rather tall with a nice, bright, frank face, lovely gray eyes, heaps of black hair, and two dimples, deep ones in her cheeks. Well, somehow, when your letter came, there came to me that memory from out of the years and so now in my mental picture of you I see that



## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

nice girl, grown more mature, but still the same. Silly, is it not, but we do get fanciful.

I shall bribe my pet nephew to take this in to the post. It's a big task to go that far just now, but I have a little feeling of wanting you to get my answer soon, so that I may receive its answer, I suppose.

Yours in all gratitude,

THIRLA."

Now that is the letter of a fine soul who is bearing her cross cheerfully. I read it to Jimmy, Mr. Vail and Jennie Wren when they came on Wednesday and they were all much interested. I will write again soon. Evidently she is pretty lonely, poor dear.

FEB. 5TH,—Mary brought Mrs. Burk and her baby to see me yesterday. I think Mary is trying to show her that she is not the only one in life who has a trouble, although, poor little woman, she quite evidently thinks there never was so terrible a one as hers, and that a little matter such as being a bed-ridden person is nothing. The baby is a duck of a baby and made up to me so that I felt that if I did not have one of my very own I should be a much abused person. As that cannot be, I just had to work off my mother yearns on Midge, who received them with exceeding coldness and showed me just how jealous and abused she felt.

The Duchess came in at tea-time and brought me an interesting account of the Hungarian family. The father has been moved to the hospital where he lies very, very ill. The mother has been helped with necessities and will be looked after by the settlement folk through her trial, and the two boys are in the office of that nice Mr. Wellmans as messenger boys. The small girl will remain with her mother. The three children will go to the settlement night classes and the boys are to keep up their music at the Sunday classes.

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I asked Martha Holding one day if they never got discouraged with all the mountains of woe and the seas of ingratitude and thriftlessness; but she declares that ingratitude is rare, that she has seen and constantly does see the most beautiful qualities of soul and heart, and that the thriftlessness is often due to ignorance. Her great faith rests in the children. She says that she can see the most satisfactory results even now. The girls who have had the settlement class training are marrying and establishing little homes and always it is one step up, in some cases many steps; and of course their children will be even more advanced in the standard of comfort and decency of living.

I do not think Mary Tobin is so optimistic; I suppose temperament has much to do with it.

Martha is so happy in her husband and babies that it lends a rosy tinge to everything.

MARCH 10TH,—Almost a month since I wrote in my diary. Had a bad ten days, but am better now. Then I found so much to do getting things into shape again that I have been busy every minute.

Mary Tobin came in one day when the pain was pretty bad and I was just holding on to myself with teeth and toe-nails to keep from getting desperate, and told me to "let go," not to try to bear it and to be quiet, but to groan and cry if it would be any relief. I did, and it was. *Memo*—No more trying to be stoical, it evidently does have a bad effect. Mary does not believe in "bottling up." Poor Nosey, though, thought I was going to die just the minute I began to make a racket, and was most weepy and miserable. She feels better now, as I am once again quiet. I presented her with a Maltese lace collar, in token of my sincere repentance for the scare. And I think that she wore it last night, over her very best gown, and went to call on the landlady next door, who also is a Welch woman.

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Poor Midge wailed when I did, a thin, sharp little cry that made me jump every time I heard it; she could not be induced to leave me five minutes. Now both invalids are feeling better and both are a trifle dressed up this afternoon. I found a lot of pretties that I had put away in the deep drawer of the chiffonier and forgotten: one was a gold bangle with a slide, so I put it on Midge and tied a great bow of crimson ribbon to it, and she is now posing before the looking glass on my dressing table, as happy and vainglorious as any other soft, feminine thing under like circumstances.

I am bedecked in a kimona of scarlet crepe, altogether silly and out of keeping with my fortunes and abode, but the day is a cold, sleety one and I craved the splatch of vivid color, so I got it out and put it on. I admit taking a surreptitious peep or so at myself and feeling a gentle glow of pleasure steal over me to find that the face confronting me was not so awful and haggard as I feared—rather 'circlly' as to eyes and they of a bigness! but on the whole, not dreadful.

I only just ten minutes ago lighted my drop light, for I stretch to the last second my twilight hour. They have, too, recently put a new and most dazzling light on the corner, so that my room is made bright almost to the reading point, not quite, however. And my eyes being the precious things they are to me I take few chances with them.

I wrote to "Thirla" and but this morning got a reply, which I will copy here.

"MARCH 1ST, CROSS ROADS.

MY DEAR GOOD SAMARITAN,—

Your letter came just at the psychological moment and saved me from desperation. There had been a series of the small, nerve-racking domestic woes, and a series of great elemental outbreaks. The combination reduced



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my good and capable sister to a mere rag, and finally she took to her bed.

Then my pet nephew got lost in the drifts on his way home from the store and after several hours was discovered nearly frozen; result, a second bed in his mother's room, where the two invalids hold court.

Such fierce storms I never remember to have experienced. Furious wind and snow-drifts mountains high. With every crack and cranny stuffed and weather-proofed, every fireplace and stove stuffed to the danger point, we still cannot *get* or keep warm.

Let me tell you, for instance, what I have on: double underclothes, a warm, wadded gown, a warmer, wadded-one over that, a hot soapstone at my feet and two stone bottles filled with boiling water at each side of me, not to mention the pair of half-mittens on my hands,—and in the house! I, who love the open, the air, and all that both mean, beyond words. Surely, 'it is to laugh!' And as laughing is far wiser under most circumstances in life, I do as much of it as possible.

Last night I could not sleep, the wind wailed so, and the old trees that stand at the side nearest my room whipped about at such a rate that I certainly thought there would be neither a branch on the trees nor a clap-board on the house. Finally my nerves got the better of me and I called to Winnie, who sleeps in a room just off mine, and she came and made up my fire and got the kettle to boiling, so I could have a hot drink; and, wrapped up in a huge bed gown of wonderful cut and material, squatted down on the hearthrug and talked to me until I felt quiet again.

Her family belonged to a tribe famous for its hunters and trappers, and her tales of the winter camps away up north in Canada make a little thing like a Dakota blizzard seem a breath from the tropics. She is full of old legends and tales, of superstitions and weird stories handed down for generations. All of which I get as

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fascinated in as though I were once again a child listening in big-eyed wonder.

You asked in your letter that I give you a sample day of my life. I will make it an ordinary one, because in times of blizzards such as this we are all out of normal. Say a date in late September.

I sleep out on my veranda, so that there is no such thing as trying to sleep after the sun is up, for we face east. About six I am loaned Winnie for an hour, who bathes me and does my hair and slips me into my day togs. Then for the remainder of the day I do not bother anyone. I wheel myself out to the dining-room where, by that time, the youngsters are assembled and presently my sister, assisted by the oldest ones, brings in the breakfast—a very bountiful one, as these growing, active young creatures seem to need quantities of nourishment.

My breakfast consists of tea and toast, coffee on Sundays. I've an individual service which I love, and the tray containing it is put on the table of my wheel-chair. The children saved up and gave it to me a year ago.

We are a very noisy lot and what is called a 'good morning crowd,' everyone being jolly and full of spirits, none of that irritability that some poor mortals seem to waken with. Finally when mounds of ham and eggs, mountains of hot cakes and quarts of milk have disappeared, the youngsters disperse, some to school, some to their various duties in farm and stable, and some to help their mother.

I wheel back to my room and read for an hour or two, usually German and French, as I do not want to get rusty. Then I write letters. That brings it to eleven, at which time my sister usually joins me on my veranda and we do an hour's mending and darning. At twelve sharp the gong rings for luncheon, and again we flock, this time to a very substantial meal.

After, I knit until three at my various mufflers, wristlets, mittens and golf stockings. I am so adept at it now

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that I can prop a book up and get on with both knitting and story, and I really knit incredibly fast. From three to four I do any little sewing that is needed.

At four, my sister in a fresh print dress, her splendid hair newly done, arrives with our tea-tray and we just allow ourselves a while of chat and laziness. Occasionally one or both of the older girls join us, but usually we have the time to ourselves, and it is then that we two get at the real 'thee and me.' We are most excellent friends.

When the clock strikes five we look guilty and sister, taking up the tea-tray, starts kitchenward. At six there is a mighty supper to be ready.

The hour between five and six I spend dipping into old favorites. I have a small case out on the veranda where I keep a couple of hundred books. My veranda is a nice place, I think you would approve of it. It is flush with my room so that I can wheel myself about from one to the other. In one corner is my bed—a very nice and 'frilly and cushiony' couch by day. Fetching rugs on the floor, rag ones, in tan and green. I made them myself. There is an old oak chest of drawers, with nice hammered brass corners and hinges, where I keep my work. There is the aforementioned case of books, and a table, big green tubs of oleander, one of white and one of red blossoms, a long box on the shady side filled with ferns, and hanging baskets of nice loopy, full-leaved greenery. I've a green Venetian to let down for the hot days. From June to October I literally live on my veranda.

I see I have quite got away from my 'sample day.'

After the supper everyone sits out under the trees and on the big veranda steps for an hour or so, then we say good-night and disperse. I generally read until ten at which time Winnie comes to put me by-by, or she may do that earlier and I lie and read until I get sleepy.

That is a very fair sample. Of course things are once in a while a trifle changed. For instance we may get one



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of the itinerant preachers for a few days, or some one of the other ranchers drops in for a night, having ridden sixty miles. We rarely see anyone fresh from the real outer world, so perhaps you can have some faint conception of what your letters are meaning to me.

To think that you were the girl of years ago whom I saw and straight-away lost my heart to, and now after all these years we find each other! We who have dwelt with pain and supped with sorrow; strange world!

I am sending by this mail a trifle of my handiwork. I got it into my mind that you loved the rich tones, so I have made it crimson with a touch of gold.

I may have to wait a day before I can get it and this letter to the post, for it is still snowing and blowing furiously.

THIRLA."

Last evening I was sitting at my window in the dusk, watching the hurrying throngs. Many of the people I am now quite familiar with. There is a nice, clever-faced, youngish woman, who, I think, is in the "gold-trimmings" place, who always gives me a smile in return for mine. I forget which of us *started* the smiling. She is pretty shabby, but her clothes have a certain cut and air, either handed down by rich relatives or friends—but no, a woman with those features would not wear anyone's old clothes. She would far rather wear poorer ones that she had earned. Well then, the only other hypothesis is, she once in so often indulges in a first-class tailor suit and wears it forever and a day.

The other day, when it was so bitter cold, she had on a short box coat of thick cloth and thick, knitted mittens, a short dark blue skirt and overshoes, and a plain blue felt hat with nothing but a quill for its trimming; what a contrast she formed to the crowd of women and girls all about her! They wore such pitifully inadequate clothing, thin, flimsy little jackets, broken-down, high-heeled

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shoes, dresses that gathered up the slush of the streets, and big be-feathered hats. Some of them are pretty, too, these working girls, in that white complexioned, finely featured style. One girl in particular has attracted my eyes. She is the exaggerated type and affects the most ultra mode. It would be pathetic if it were not so funny. She is just now balancing on a pair of stilt-like heels and her pretty face is nearly half obscured by the very largest and bushiest of pompadours and side puffs, and a huge hat in crimson beaver with two plumes and a gilt buckle large enough for a breast-plate crown the towering hair. A thin little black jacket and skirt, cut in the very up-to-the-last-minute mode, complete the ensemble, and in spite of all of it the girl is a picture. She, too, looks at my window and just tips a little smile from the corner of her lovely lips, pretty thing!

There is a very nice looking, middle aged man, I fancy a bookkeeper, looks seedily clerical,—I think he is a dreamer and lives more in Spain than here,—who passes at irregular hours.

There is a couple, man and woman, who always go arm-in-arm in a most contented and domestic fashion. I should like to know their little romance. They, too, are shabby, but they are warmly and comfortably dressed. Such nice, plain faces, the woman very nice looking, in fact, just escaping prettiness. They often stop to buy five or ten cents' worth of roast chestnuts from the Italian opposite, and once in a while a couple of big, mealy, piping hot sweet potatoes. The hot sweet potato man does a fine, brisk trade at evening these cold nights and so does the hot Hamburg steak man.

I saw my nice looking, middle aged bookkeeper come along the other evening, a trifle after the rush was gone, and, after looking quickly about to see if he was unobserved, buy two hot potatoes, and putting one in each overcoat pocket walk on briskly. That rather surprised me, for if he is married he must have a chance to have

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his potatoes at home. Maybe he is a bachelor, poor fellow, and does his small housekeeping for himself. Many men do.

My Jennie Wren girl is such a joy to me. What a discovery that was! We are most congenial, and have such nice booky, talky times. I think Jimmy looks a bit disappointed if she does not come in whilst he is here—I wonder!

MARCH 27TH,—I have decided to do something to earn a trifle of money. These once clever fingers are not living up to their highest, so after long thinking about it I decided for decorating boxes—all kinds, painted, poker work, braided silk ribbon, boxes made of ruching; in fact, as many kinds and for as many purposes as fair women have desires. I made four for samples: one of pale mauve ruching, lined with Dresden silk, a silk loop and an amethyst button for a catch. One of braided satin ribbon in three shades of old rose, with a pink silk braided frog and a coral for fasteners. I did a cedar wood box with an arabesque in poker work, washed in in colors, strapped it with a strip of leather in pinky tan and buckled it with a bronze buckle. I made for the last a tan wrapping-paper one, tied with autumn leaf shades, and washed in a bit of landscape on the cover. I sent them, done up in a white tissue paper, to the Woman's Exchange, along with the card Mary Tobin had procured for me.

The work on them had taken me the better part of three days. The materials cost me, wholesale, \$3.25. My outfits of pyrography and colors I had. I put moderate prices on them as I need not count my time. So now we shall see how they will do. When I sent around to the old firms for the ruchings and ribbon, I mentioned in my note to Mr. Wellman that I intended making some "attractive un-necessities" for sale, by way of earning a trifle. He sent me the nicest note in reply, and gave



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me the lowest prices, of course. I fancy he would greatly have liked to say, "Oh, you may have all that you want." (When a man has once offered a woman all of his personal possessions and himself, he does not stick at a small thing like ruchings and ribbons.) Of course he dared not, but he *did* ask in his note if he might come to see me, and now that there is no probability of his being anxious to marry me we can, I think, be good friends. I always did like him that way, and I've none too many friends now.

Mary Tobin came in yesterday. The Hungarian gentleman died and the poor wife gave premature birth to a girl baby and is very ill. Dr. Holding and Martha have taken the case and the settlement workers have agreed to look after the three other children.

I have made acquaintance with the eccentric and choleric old gentleman the children call "Santa Claus," and he is delightful. The manners of a Lord Chesterfield when he is in the humor, and the vocabulary of a trooper when he is angry. I just have to have my door open awhile every morning, before Midge will settle down for the day. She must go up to call on Mr. Vail and I am so fearful lest she find the front door open and slip out that until she has come back for good I keep *my* door open. So the old Colonel,—Pepper by name (and by nature I should judge)—looked in as he was going past, and took off his cap, one of those dark, large crowned, black visored ones, and "hoped I was standing the cold weather well." I thanked him for his interest and envied him his ability to go for tramps, which it seems he loves, and so our acquaintance was properly begun. To-day he knocked at my door just at tea-time, bringing me a perfect armful of winter greenery, gathered, he said, over in Jersey. I asked him to tea and we had a very pleasant chat.

He has been abroad and loves the old world. Is a tremendous reader, a great talker and talks well. He made

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no confidence about his personal history, so I've no idea what it is, but he is very unusual and charming, clean and well groomed looking, evidently poor,—for else he would not live in this quarter,—and cooks his own meals when he is at home, but is away often for days.

I am filled with interest and amusement,—Nosey has a beau! and it is great larks watching her. He is the proprietor of the very flourishing corner grocery two blocks off, a widower with two children. German and blond, kindly and sentimental, and comes laden with tribute to lay at the No. 7 shoes of my good Nosey. Last time it was some truffled sausage and a cheese that threatened to asphyxiate us, so we hung it out the alley window in a string bag, but it is delicious once you get within the halo of smell.

We arranged a way to get the better of the smell and still enjoy the cheese. We bundled up warmly and then opened the window. Upon the ledge we cut our cheese, placing generous layers of the rich creaminess between slices of fresh, homemade rye bread, and we ate it holding our heads out the window, at least Nosey did. I could not quite manage that gymnastic, but I got my chair as close as possible to the window. Afterward I went to my room and rinsed my mouth for ten minutes and brushed my teeth with listerine and prayed I should have no company that afternoon; but I did, and I was so self-conscious I finally had to explain myself, whereat great mirth and I suppose I shall have the life teased out of me. It must have been rather funny, come to think of it.

Midge was left out of the spree and now won't notice me, she is so mad. Am coming around to a belief in a possibility of— *I know* Midge is "*folks*."

APRIL 30TH,—Over a month since I wrote in you, my patient diary. Such a nice month as it has been, too.

My boxes sold like hot cakes and I have orders ahead

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that will keep me in work for the next month. I certainly shan't get rich at it, but I shall be able to earn twenty-five a month—more if I want to give up more time to it, which I don't, and that will pay for my little luxuries this year. Next year,—well, next year must take care of itself. I always have my little fifty-five and in this quarter that is "bloated plutocracy," just as having an entire room to one's self is an indication either of wealth or of undue recklessness in expenditure.

Nosey is going to marry the nice German. His two well-scrubbed blond children have taken a fancy to her; how could they help it, she fairly radiates friendliness, and, until the flat over his shop (which, by the way, he owns) is vacant, they will all live here. By turning out two people on the next floor there will be room enough.

The German is a very well educated man, it appears, and comes of good stock. His father was a Lutheran clergyman. So Nosey need not feel that her Welch father will turn in his grave, and I really believe they are going to be happy.

The wedding takes place on the first and the newly wedded pair go on a week's honeymoon to the seashore, taking with them the two children. Disinterested affection can no further go!

The Hungarian mother died. The baby is flourishing and Mary Tobin has adopted it. I nearly fell off my chair when I heard it, Martha Holding told me. I gasped and Martha laughed. "Why Mary will be the best kind of a mother and that is a most fortunate mite, I can tell you. The baby is to be named Estrella Tobin."

Later Mary came in and I congratulated her. "I suppose all of you think me quite daft," she said. I hastened to assure her that we thought nothing of the kind, and she confided to me that she had always meant to do it when the right time, baby and circumstances came to hand.

Midge was lost for three days, or stolen; I was so un-



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happy over it I felt ashamed of myself. I have so often said, when I saw women making a fuss over a small dog, how silly and how wrong to lavish care and money and love on an animal when the world is filled with poor wretched children. How we do have to "eat our words." I justify myself to myself by saying, "Yes, but this is an exceptional case." And truly it is, too.

It was the Italian hot potato man who brought Midge back to me. He came across her in the arms of a small child over in Cat Alley, and he recognized her from having seen me holding her up at the window. The gold bangle was, of course, gone from her neck and she was dirty and covered with fleas, but I was so glad to get the small runaway I did not care a tuppence.

Jennie Wren is saving up her dollars, so that when she has a thousand she may go for a year to Europe. She is fairly counting her pennies and going without everything unnecessary so that she may the sooner get together the money. She has been saving for six years and has nearly eight hundred dollars. When she told me she said,—“I suppose most people would think me quite mad and wholly improvident not to use that money as a nest egg for the proverbial rainy day, but I have looked the thing in the face, I think, squarely and made up my mind that about all that life held for me was joy of the spirit, so it behooved me to make myself rich. If I become sick and am moneyless there are public wards of public hospitals; but I do not intend to be sick, on the contrary I shall be well enough to earn my living up to my *final* trip.”

She has been reading for this wonderful trip for years and I marvel at her knowledge. She has created a most beautiful world for herself and whether she goes or not in the flesh won't really much matter.

The air is beautifully springlike and after the fearful winter everyone is welcoming this softness.

All of the girls who pass my window have blossomed

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out in flower trimmed hats and even my nice, sensible girl, she of the box coats and short skirts, has a trim little navy blue sailor with a great bunch of bachelor buttons on it, altogether smart and avenueish looking, and a very jaunty dark blue jacket and skirt, and tan dog-skin gloves. Evidently this is the year when my lady fits herself out freshly. I would like to bet on the proposition that each article came from the best shop selling that particular line of goods.

There is an added charm in her expression. Something pleasant has come into her life, I fancy, beyond the "new pretties" and the spring, she always smiles so brightly at me.

The nice middle aged man now looks shabbier, I wonder why? Is it that he does not care, that all of this flutter of soft breezes and bright frocks has no effect upon him, or must he for some reason economize strictly. It might seem so, from his so often buying during this winter from the Hamburg steak and hot potato man, for I saw that he did many times.

The very, very pretty girl, she of the great pompadour and stilt-like heels, has disappeared from my ken. I wonder where and why. Such exceeding prettiness is a danger.

Mr. Wellman has been to see me. He chose one blustering night when it seemed that we had gone back to winter, about a month ago. I was quite alone, my long chair adjusted near the droplight, Midge a small ball of fur before the fire on the rug. I had a "Far East" mood on and was at Hodinugger with Gwen Boynton, Rose Tweedie and the others, when I heard the front bell ring. When Nosey opened the door, the "Can I see Mrs. Martin" was plainly heard. Nosey was evidently nonplussed but finally said she would see, and knocked at my door. I called out "Yes, Nosey, 'tis an old friend, I know his voice, bring him in."

We had not met since the memorable time when I de-

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clined firmly to marry him, almost a year and a half ago.

I would not allow any sense of embarrassment, so greeted him as though no time had elapsed since our last meeting, and presently we were talking away like mad. We always were the best of chums until he got that "marry-me" maggot in his head. He was just about leaving for a two months' trip to Mexico and promised to bring me a lot of photographs; it was almost twelve when he said goodbye. I don't know when I have had so jolly an evening.

Martha Holding asked me to write for the settlement workers, a little tale of my accident and my life, putting in detail my small economies and management of finances. I have done so. It was for one of the "Comfort Meetings" which are proving so successful.

To break up the statistical and tabulated look and sound of it, I made it into a sort of diary.

It has, it seems, proved a howling success. So much so that many people have asked to have the menus and directions and Mary Tobin has decided to let the printers strike off a hundred copies to be sold at fifty cents a copy, which will pay for the expense.

Had a letter from Thirla after so long a silence that I had begun to fear her seriously ill. I will copy it down now.

"CROSS ROADS, April 22nd.

My last letter, dear woman, went to you from the very heart of a blizzard, which left in its track devastation of all sorts. Our old, well-built house stood, but two of our barns and any quantity of out-houses went, and after the blizzard had spent its fury the weather was so cruelly cold that we were house-bound, and we all got a trifle rasped as to nerves, so that when the weather broke there was great rejoicing.

I managed to get along rather better than the others, as there was no very great difference between this and



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other times to me, but the children! ye gods! how they did racket. For the very first time in their lives I could have wished myself somewhere else.

Speaking of wishing myself somewhere else, if I had the money do you know what I would do? I would hire a nurse and a stretcher and have myself transplanted bodily to New York and beg nice, kind Mrs. Nosey to take me in and let me have a room next to you for a couple of months.

I want to meet all of these people you write me of: I want to *see activity* again, even though I can take no part in it. Your letters have brought me new impulses. The life currents have taken on higher rates of vibration because of this breaking up of the years' long apathy, and I feel as I did oh, years and years ago and find it almost impossible to believe myself couch-bound.

I suppose it is just old dame nature getting in a bit of what my nephew terms her "fine work," a sort of last call.

Of course it is not necessary to tell you, you most intuitive of friends, that I have been and, in fact, am struggling with what is popularly called a case of blue devils. All of which is very silly, and do not for an instant think I am giving way to them. On the contrary I regularly, daily,—or rather nightly, for it's then they are most devilish,—take myself *well* in hand and have it out with myself and by the time I have cast up the account, *always* showing a balance to the good in blessings, (the finding of you not among the least), I drop off to sleep thinking 'at last am I rid of the brutes?' No such good fortune. One greets my eyes upon opening them the following morning, and others flock fast. I am at the last of my resources, everything that I have in the past found efficacious fails me lamentably now. What I need is an object lesson, quite evidently. Can you not scare up a No. 3 to our club, someone who is so much worse off than we, or rather I, that I can feel myself in

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great luck in comparison? I suppose that is a weird idea, but the other night when I was going over my blessings a hateful little demon kept whispering "I don't believe anyone is so badly off" right in the midst of my most valiant assertions.

I am flatly disgusted with myself. Come to the rescue with a good strong plank, or I shall be drowned in a sea of my own fears.

Yours, THIRLA."

I did not let any time slip away before answering that letter and I hope my answer carried comfort. Good Lord! who would not get blue, shut off for years from everything that spells life, in a narrow family circle, away out on the edge of the bleakest winter land, poor dear!

I read her letter to Jennie Wren and Jimmy Wise and they both said,—“Oh, what a tragedy of loneliness and heartache, and is she not the bravest!”

That is, Jennie said that and Jimmy nodded agreement. Jimmy I find generally does agree with Jennie.

MAY 7TH,—Thirla's letter lay so on my heart that I could not settle comfortably to my usual occupations and as Mary Tobin dropped in to tea the second day after it came, I read it to her.

After I had finished, Mary said,—“I have the No. 3 for your club that your friend wants. If you two women do not realize that you both *are* fortunate, after what Ann Clancy can tell you of woes, I am willing to call myself anything you name.”

“Ann Clancy! who on earth is she? and *what* an uncompromising sort of name, it sounds grim.”

Mary smiled. “Well it sounds wrong, then, for she is anything but grim. I will let her tell you about herself in her own way, but it was only this very morning that she said to me,—

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"Miss Mary, don't you know someone worse off than I, whom I can cheer up a trifle by an occasional letter?"

"I said *no!* and I meant it, but now I have heard your Thirla's cry-from-the-wilderness I take it back. I'll leave you Ann's address. You can drop her a note and tell her of your friend's woes."

Mary wrote on a scrap of paper from her note book,—

MRS. ANN CLANCY,  
4th Floor, Room Front,  
No. 0 Cat Alley, off Munster Place,  
Entrance through blind Alley.

I must have stared, for she laughed and said,—

"The location leaves a few things to be desired in the way of outlook and general sanitation, does it not?"

Then she left and I sat for an hour conjuring up horrors. Finally I wrote a note to this Ann person and I gave her an outline of Thirla's and my life and enclosed Thirla's letters, including this last one.

Two days later the postman gave me the answer through the open window where I sat getting a glimpse of the two solitary bits of green within sight and a dash of radiant blue sky, incidentally busying myself with my box-making, which thrives. I will just copy it in my diary along with my other ones.

"CAT ALLEY, May 2nd.

So—Hilda Martin, you and your friend Thirla want someone to feel sorry for, someone who is so much worse off in most ways than you both that by contrast you may feel fortunate.

Yes, I know that feeling, I too had it, occasionally still have it, but in my surroundings it is so very easy of gratification.

Evidently the good Mary told you nothing of me, and you want to know. I will put it rather baldly and we can fill up in fullest manner later.



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I am forth: Scotch-Irish, the widow of an Irishman, one of the cleverest of men, and without the shadow of a doubt the very worst. He is serving a thirty years' sentence in Joliet.

I was born in Dublin. My father was a barrister, talented and ambitious. He committed suicide when I was under thirteen, leaving little.

My governess and masters were sent away. My mother, heartbroken and ashamed, took me, her only child, with her to the Continent, where for some six years we lived in small cities where we were unknown and could wear our shabby clothes without fear of comment. Then she died and I was quite alone in the world.

I met the man. At that time he was kind to me, a lonely girl. He professed to love me and we were married. From that time until I was thirty-four we lived as do our kind in most of the capitals of Europe, and finally came to America. Six months after our arrival he was caught, tried, sentenced and condemned to prison for thirty years, for forgery *and* embezzlement.

Two years after, as I was coming from my work one evening (I had applied for and obtained a position as saleswoman in a large cloak shop, and was settling down into a sort of resigned contentment) as I started to get off the car at my corner, I was thrown violently from the step, directly in front of a team. The horses injured me before the people who rushed to my assistance could drag me away.

I spent a year in the hospital and left it minus one leg, gone from the knee, and the other, useless, really worse, for it's only a nuisance and I wish it were gone too.

I might have sued the railroad, but I did not, so that when I faced life again I had almost literally nothing. My employer, a kind man, sent me two hundred dollars. I hated to take it, but I felt I must, as a loan. I have repaid it.

I had made a friend of a woman who was a patient in

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the cot next to me at the hospital and when she left, months before I, she made me promise that I would come to her when I left the hospital. She was also poor, but could work. I went and we lived together for two years, I doing the home-keeping,—I am wonderfully spry on my crutches,—she earning the money for the home. That brought me to two years ago, when she, dear soul, passed out and on.

Then I went to keep house for two working-girls who wanted a home. At the end of a year they both married.

Then I determined to make a home for myself. During these years I had put by a little money, earned by various methods, such as mending, darning, and occasional copying of music, which I am good at, and so I took this room in this location, partly because of an idea that I had of which I will tell you later. Partly because the rental was so little and it got sunlight, something desirable when one wants to save on fuel and light.

I had it scrubbed within an inch of its life, and the walls covered with a cheap but pretty paper; at its two windows I put fresh scrim curtains which I hemstitched; added a couple of rag rugs, which I made; a box couch; a plain deal table; a chest of drawers; a couple of low chairs; a little stove. One shelf held my entire outfit of table wear.

I had left from the old times a few things in the way of pretties, but I did not want to use them at the start, as the possession of them there would interfere with the plan I had.

Owing to the settlement women's insistence, water was piped to each floor of this house, so I could easily get what I needed. Back of a screen was my tub, a zinc washtub, connected by a pipe with the waste pipe of the wash basin. Poor as the people were amongst whom I had taken up my life, none but felt me poorer, and that was what I wanted, the first step along the road.

Now I have been living here nearly a year. I manage

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to earn about thirty dollars a month, occasionally,—not often,—forty. Several times it has fallen as low as twenty.

Gradually I have added the few things I had left with a friend to keep for me, and now a long book-shelf, or rather *four* shelves hold my small library. On the walls are my dozen pictures. I have had one of my two windows glassed out, so that all winter my flowers flourish, and I envy no one anything.

I am rich in friends. The heart histories of all my neighbors are confided to me. My life is very full and I consider it very blest.

Although I can get about well on a level I can do nothing with stairs, so I am virtually a "shut-in." Since I came here I have not been down-stairs but once.

There you have my story. Do you want to call me No. 3 in this trinity?

Send this on to your Thirla. Her letters have been so good for me. They brought me a breath of the open and great spaces. There has always been in me a crying hunger for them.

Yours,

ANN CLANCY."

I was so interested and excited that I wrote straight away off to Thirla, telling her all about things and enclosing Ann's letter. Oh! *what* a wonderful world it is.

Dear Nosey,—I cannot remember to call her by her new name,—is just home from her week's honeymoon and as happy as can be. I missed her sorely, as I had to wait on myself entirely. It is the baths that are the difficult things, but I must not grumble, I am in great good luck to be able to have them at all. I can stand poverty, that's a mere nothing; I can stand a certain amount of sickness, and pain; but if I had to submit to being poor *and* sick *and* dirty I would cheerfully give up the ghost.

Last evening we had a musical treat. Jimmy and Mr.



## CHUMS

Vail played for a couple of hours and Jennie and I sat and got really music drunk. Afterwards we had a small spread and talked over our favorites. Mr. Grossburg (the new husband) is a music lover; likewise, in his "hours of ease" plays the flute. Of course, it would be either flute or piccolo; the great giants of men invariably do and the midgets play the bass viol. It seems Mr. G. has taken an absorbing interest in our evenings. I think we shall have to ask him occasionally to join us.

JUNE 8TH,—I am, as I sit writing, looking out to the street across a window-box of mignonette and pink ivy geranium, and I feel extremely festive.

The weather is everything that weather should be in June. Everyone is wearing a June expression and the hats of all the girls who go past are veritable flower gardens.

Yesterday I saw my nice bookkeeper and my nice tailor-made girl go past together and apparently very interested in each other and I noticed that he is what Nosey would call "spruced up." Likewise *she* has taken to a hat with a half-wreath of pale pink roses. Oh! would it not be charming if they two should fall in love? I am quite certain that they would be happy. Which statement, considering that I have but a bowing acquaintance with one of the parties concerned, certainly either indicates rare powers of intuition on my part, or a general mushiness of dull gray matter. I choose to believe it the former.

As quickly as mails could bring it, I heard from Thirla in answer to my letter enclosing Ann's. Such a letter!

"CROSS ROADS.

DEAR SAMARITAN,—

I have written to Ann today and I have read and re-read her letter. All day it haunted me—all night I pic-

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

tured her and her surroundings. What a history, and told like the report of a deal in wheat, instead of in human hearts and lives. I think it gained in effectiveness from the very manner of telling. My imagination filled in the details as my eyes grasped the outline. The bravery, the sheer pluck of it all! I shall be on tenter-hooks until I hear from her again.

What is this plan she speaks of? Have you any idea? Oh, I should like to see her.

A crazy scheme came to me as I read that sentence "it brought me a breath of the open and great spaces." This scheme might seem on the face of it a wild and impractical one, so before I give voice to it I will think it over well.

For the nonce I am over my wild yearnings. Probably the weather has helped. 'Tis no end lovely now and once more I am out of doors day *and* night, and as we are having the wrecked barns and out-houses rebuilt, there is a cheerful sound of hammer and saw, and often as many as two neighbors a day drive in to inspect and suggest, so that things seem quite lively.

My good sister has been ordered off for a change so she is taking one of her girls and going to Butte for a two months' visit with our old friend who is married and living there, and the rest of the chicks are going to run the house, turn and turn about, until her return.

I propose to be very busy this summer. That busy bee won't be in it with yours truly. You must grow accustomed to my copious use of slang. With eight youngsters about one can really not help absorbing it and finally getting to feel that it *only* adequately expresses. What a spendthrift lot we are, we Americans. The way we throw away our adjectives and double superlatives forces us to coin new terms.

Your account of your box making and its success has greatly interested me. What delightful work.

I am sending you by this post a little box, made by

## CHUMS

my mother's mother, easily seventy years ago. Yes, you are to keep it. I have another and, in fact, in the family we own still another. It seemed a favorite way of amusing one's self in her day.

My sister has a quantity of things that go back to our grandmothers' and great-grandmothers' time: some old silver and prints; some etchings and quaint old faded pastels and water colors. I have always cast longing eyes on them, but they were left to her by a sister of our mother's who loved her and distinctly disapproved of me. Upon looking back to my childhood days, I find that I was rather a 'limb' as the saying goes, while my sister was everything that a girl should be.

My niece has just brought me out a great bowl of butter and sugar to cream for her cake and now, in the absence of the housekeeper, even I must do my share. (Parenthetically—I adore the particular kind of cake that this is to be creamed for, so goodbye for this time.)

Yours,  
THIRLA."

I wondered what she had written to Ann and a few days after I heard, a little of it. Ann did not send me the letter. I think I can see that it is those two who are going to "belong" the hardest. The knowledge gave me a pang for a moment, but I downed it. The green-eyed monster shall find no single nook or corner wherein to dwell and instead, I'll just glory in the good that those two will get out of the friendship.

The box Thirla sent arrived and of all the ducky things! It is a small arm-chair the seat of which lifts up and under is a place for rings. It is *perfect*, the whole thing done in needle-point, a replica of a tapestry arm-chair. I shall just love it and have put it on my dressing-table, but really it should go in a cabinet, only that I do not now possess such a luxury. I shall copy the idea, only I shall *not* do it in needle-point embroidery, but, instead, in a bit of gorgeous Dresden ribbon.

My boxes are selling so well that I have to remind my-



## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

self that I must not be taken with a fit of undue pride or a fit of undue recklessness. It may be that they have got only a passing grip on the feminine fancy and will have their day. My brain is working over-time trying to vary the designs and thus create a fresh demand. All sorts of purely decorative work appeal strongly, which is rather a queer proposition, considering to what rather stern practicalities my life has been reduced. Which remark I made to Mr. Wellman recently, and could have bitten out my tongue directly after, fearing that he might think me pitying myself, or possibly wanting again to be invited to be Mrs. Wellman.

The chums, of whom Martha Holding has so often spoken, have arrived and are soon coming to have tea with me. It is so delightful to me that, in spite of all of the limitations of my position and condition, I am not avoided.

Mary Tobin came in to bring me the message from Martha and tell me of Ann's receipt of Thirla's letter. In reference to a remark that she (Mary) had made about Thirla's and my realization of our blessings after we had heard Ann's woes, I had quite misunderstood her. She did not mean Ann's *personal* woes, for it appears that Ann does not consider that she has a *woe*, let alone *woes*, but she meant the vicarious ones. Everyone goes to Ann for advice and sympathy and in consequence she is able to give pointers on how to keep alive on next to nothing a month; how to keep warm with next to nothing on; how to be cheerful though next to empty.

The Salvation Army people have opened a reading-room and relief bureau just across the street and I am watching proceedings with great interest. The officer in charge is a woman of forty-odd with a very dear face; I should like to know her. We are already on a smiling and nodding acquaintance.

JULY 26TH,—I will copy Thirla's last letter the first thing before I go into any details of the doings of these past weeks.

## CHUMS

### "CROSS ROADS.

#### BEST AND MOST UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN,—

I read between the lines of your letter and lest there should be the slightest shadow of a misapprehension, let me hasten to say that whilst you are right in one way, Ann *has* touched my heart greatly, yet Ann nor anyone else can ever be to me what you have been through these last few months. It seems difficult to realize that it is only a question of months, we seem always to have belonged.

Since I wrote last nothing of any great interest has occurred here, or to me. Things are going on in their accustomed way, so I will copy Ann's letter to me. How queer that you and she, separated but by a mile of brick and mortar, should commence acquaintance in this way.

### CAT ALLEY.

There was a strip of wild Irish coast where, as a child, in company with my mother and governess, I went often during the heat of the summer. We had a cottage there, just on the edge of the land and it was that, I think, that bit deep into my soul the love and hunger for great spaces, dear Thirla woman, and it has been a long, long while that my farthest gaze has been across a narrow brick courtyard,—if I look out; but if I look up, ah! then it is quite different.

During the summer here in New York, everyone who cannot stand the crowded, heated rooms, goes to the parks and roofs, and I have been sleeping on a strip of roof which is off my room, just large enough to hold my mattress comfortably. One of my neighbors, a handy man, cut down the bit of wall, so it is flush with my floor, and made me a door out there. With no roof, I can lie and look up into the sky and thus get my 'great spaces.' The immensity staggers one's imagination.

Aside from that particular hunger I really am well content. You see, so much of life comes to me that I never for a moment feel lonely.

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

You ask so particularly about what the plan is that I mentioned, I feel it best to tell you now so that we can get acquainted rapidly. You see, I, to be content with myself, must be of some real use in life, and as almost every avenue of usefulness was closed to me because of my physical drawbacks, there remained but the one that a friend of mine, a Salvation Army lass, calls 'radiation.' So, then, where to establish a 'center' where it was most needed, and I knew that this particular district was about as good a field as could be found. Every one of the vices and, as far as the casual glance went, none of the virtues. The first step was to find a place where my great need of decent air and sun could be gratified, and I found it here on the fourth floor. My room is so situated that I do get sunshine. Then, to become known in the quarter as pretty helpless, absolutely poor, earning my living, and that the simplest: yet clean, with my one room a restful and not unattractive place. Right there I, of course, had the pull in influence, for was I not one of them? So it has been a wonderful year to me, and now? Now! I would not give up the opportunities that have come to me in exchange for any amount of what goes under the name of 'the comforts' of life.

Now, all that I would welcome the possession of money for would be to help, and my charities would mostly take the shape of kindergartens, arts and crafts schools and agricultural schools, helping people to help themselves, and making them see the unloveliness of the so-called 'life of ease.'

I have a good many socialist friends, people who have what I believe to be the *right* idea, and the reports that I get are encouraging,—but I am getting away from my daily doings, and that, it seems, is the thing of the moment.

How things fall away from us, the small vanities and aims, as we grow older, and especially if we be forced by physical limitations to live more from within. I look back to all of those selfish years and marvel not so much



## CHUMS

at the fact of the selfishness, bless you no, I am quite as much so now, but at the particular *kind* of selfishness.

You see we change even in our outlook upon life, don't we? The time was when it would have seemed utter awfulness to be poor, crippled, and living in Cat Alley. Why, I can well remember the time, and it was not so far back, that I trembled at the thought of a possible privation. Just a few short years do wonders. Now, I believe that I am getting more downright joy out of life than I ever even suspected life had in it.

To your question of whether it does not make me miserable to see all of the want and wretchedness: Yes and no. You see, believing as I do that we get just what we have earned, I can not feel it right to feel too badly, any more than I can feel badly over myself, that part of it all I resolutely put away from me. And now I am building for myself and helping others to build, better karmas for 'next time' and so the days go. And all of these heart histories and problems that come before my eyes, do you think I would miss these?

As I have 'reduced my desires within the bounds of the enough' I find myself having considerable time that I can spend as I wish with a clear conscience. So I read and even study. Owing to my past life of 'pillar to post' I am a good bit of a linguist and possess some half-dozen languages and am now adding to my stock. This is a most polyglot district, you know, so my accomplishment comes in well.

All sorts of interesting things have come under my eyes since my arrival here in Cat Alley. We have harbored people belonging to about every known and many old, dimly suspected trades. We have had marriages, births, deaths, suicides *and* murders; and little things like fights, daily. We have even had the honor of having a case of triplets, and they were the cutest things.

So you see my life is not cut off from human interests.

I am going to make a great effort some day next week

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

and go to see Hilda Martin. Two of the boys in the house will carry me down stairs and Dr. Holding's cousin, Mrs. Ferguson, is to lend me her carriage, and from it to Hilda's room, which they tell me is on the first floor, I can make shift with my crutches and a bit of help. I am most anxious to see her. After I have seen her I will write you all about our visit.

Yours,

ANN.

So, my dearest Hilda woman, you two will be able to actually look into each other's eyes deep down and read the soul writing. Oh, I am jealous! When you tell me of it, tell me every least thing: what you wore, what you did, what you said.

Lovingly,

THIRLA."

Well, the visit was paid, and such a day as we had together. We "chummed" from the moment our eyes met and as she came early we had a nice long visit. Luncheon together, and we got it ourselves. It was a warm day and we were both so excited that we could not eat much, so we compromised on bowls of crackers and milk and gave the luncheon to a couple of children who were eating but a piece of bread, sitting on the curb. I passed the dish out of the window to them, and they literally cleaned it out. It bore a striking resemblance to an article that had been polished, when it was returned with thanks.

In the afternoon, just as I was making tea, Martha Holding came, bringing with her the two chums she had so often spoken of, delightful women, and we did have a jolly tea. They brought an armful of flowers and filled all of my jugs and vases and stayed until six o'clock, promising to come again.

Bell Ferguson came to get Ann and we said goodbye.

## CHUMS

I *never* hated so to see anyone go away as I did to see her.

I wish we three, Thirla, Ann and I could live together.

Jimmy Wise has confided in me. He is in love with Jennie Wren. I suspected it, dear old Jimmy, the very kindest and best of men. I wonder if she cares anything for him? I know that she likes him, but that is absolutely all I do know. Jimmy has asked me to find out for him. He is too timid to ask point blank.

I think my nice girl and the bookkeeper are certainly engaged. And he looks years younger, is brushed and pressed, polished and button-holed to within an inch of his life. I am *so* glad I knew those two belonged.

In this weather every one who can lives out-of-doors: last week Mr. Grossburg arranged with the landlord of this place for a long lease and now he is going to build out a little balcony and cut down one of my front windows, so I can wheel my chair out on it every day. I am so delighted. All of my friends who take an interest in me have been to congratulate me. So quite soon now I, too, shall belong to the sidewalk and front stoop brigade.

SEPT. 2ND,—Last month was so fiercely hot that I nearly melted. Lost pounds, but, aside from the discomfort, felt very well. My room being on the shady side afternoons was a great comfort. Likewise, my balcony is a joy to me. It's so close to the sidewalk that every passer-by can brush its railing, but I like that. It gives me a feeling of being in the world, and as everyone in the neighborhood is friendly, it is very jolly.

I have an awning and some pots of flowers and the man with the sprinkling cart goes past twice a day.

I have taken to just about living out-of-doors, for I eat my luncheon, drink my tea and usually eat my supper here. I feel quite festive. It's done something to my spirits and when Jennie and Jimmy or Mr. Vail drop



## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

in to supper and we all sit about the window and on the balcony, with our table drawn up, it seems like a faint ghost of long ago, under other skies, under oh! such different circumstances.

We have our musical evening regularly: Jimmy at the piano, Mr. Vail with his violin and Mr. Grossburg with the flute, which I must admit the good man plays remarkably well. From eight to ten they play and Jennie and I, and sometimes Nosey, sit out on the balcony and listen. So does the entire neighborhood—not on the balcony, but on the curbstone, the front steps and the fire-escapes. How these people do adore music, and they like good music, too. The ice cream peddler does a thriving business, and I fear so does Mike Kelly at the second corner, for I see in the dim light, suspicious glints, refracted lights on pail and pitcher.

We have a mild refreshment ourselves, when the music is over, which takes the form of iced lemonade for us women and iced beer for the men. That is Mr. Grossburg's doings. He is truly Germanic in his every thought and as kind as can be. Our dear Nosey certainly was in luck when she caught his heart.

During this hot weather I almost live on milk, nice, creamy milk from the settlement shop. That is the very best bit of philanthropy the city has ever seen, that pure milk depot.

I hear often from Ann. We make use of everyone who comes to see us as messengers and send back and forth voluminous letters.

There has been a most decided let-up in the demand for boxes and last month I made only ten dollars, but as almost everyone is out of town who buys that sort of thing it is not to be wondered at. However I had an order for two poker work trays: bunch of grapes with leaves, and oak branch with leaves and acorns, *and* I had a compliment. Someone said that my work came as a great relief after the bushels of amateurish stuff.

## CHUMS

Years ago when I was an occasional patron of "woman's exchanges" always there was something pathetic to me in their exhibits. I sensed the histories back of it all, and when things were particularly awful, and occasionally they were, I felt like weeping. How little I thought then that the day would come when I should be one of those who "made things for the W. E." Well, if none of them are more unhappy than I, no one need waste a tear on them.

I have a warm sort of feeling around my heart when I think of my little fifty-odd a month. Now, if I did not have that,—ah! things might look a trifle blue.

Poor Midge has felt the heat so that I have clipped her and although she is undoubtedly far more comfortable and that pink tongue of hers does not wave to the breeze quite so much, her vanity is sorely tried and she has not quite forgiven me for making her comfortable at the expense of her beauty. Everyone upon catching a glimpse of her for the first time, goes into convulsions of laughter. She does look droll. She is quite bow legged, something we never suspected with the long coat on, and such a tiny, queer little body with a queer bump, like a Yorkshire terrier. I laugh myself. So she is sulking hard, and at the sound of a strange footstep, she hides. I never saw such intelligence. Jennie Wren is the only one who has not laughed at her and Midge knows it.

Jennie, by the way, has refused Jimmy. Would not tell me she did not care for him, only that she did not think such a woman as she had any right to marry, and just would not be talked to about it. So, fearing to lose her if I persisted, I gave up.

Jimmy feels badly, but he is just as dear and thoughtful as ever, although not so spontaneously merry.

A week ago Mary Tobin came in to say goodbye. She is off to the mountains with Estrella, the baby, for a month. Incidentally, she has taken three poor young mothers with her. She is the best, or one of the best

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

women I ever knew, and so matter of fact about it all. She has a little farm, left to her by some relative, in New Hampshire and usually some poor souls she has come across who need a chance to get well or strong, or just in tune with things, are camping out there.

The dear little Duchess passed out two weeks ago and all of the settlement workers are heartbroken. Such a funeral was never seen. I just had a good weep myself, for of all the lovely women she was the loveliest. She had wished to be cremated when her time came, believing that the spirit suffered less in its severance from the body if the body was quickly disintegrated, and was more quickly freed by fire. She was an old, old woman and prepared to go, but oh, I am so sorry that she has gone.

Today I felt a queer prickling sensation at the base of my spine. I wonder what that means? I had a heart jump for a second, at the thought that it might mean renewed health, but when I tried to see if there was any sensation in my leg, I found it as ever a dead thing.

OCT. 5TH,—Five weeks since I last wrote in my diary and I thought at one time I never should do so again. Following out the old proverb "It never rains," etc., all sorts of things have occurred to me physically, financially and emotionally. As the financial looms biggest, I'll put it down first.

I was sitting on my balcony one day as usual, the date September 5th, I'll never forget it, when the postman handed me a bunch of mail with the wish that the letters had good news in them. There was one fat one from Thirla; one from Mr. Wellman; one from Mary Tobin; and a fourth, handwriting unknown. That I opened first, and veritably 'tis a bolt from the clear sky that strikes one. It was a notice that the President of the H. and N. H. Bank had committed suicide and that they had discovered that he had appropriated the Bank's



## CHUMS

funds and securities to a huge amount. All of which from a purely benevolent outlook would be "*too bad*," but when one's poor little all is amongst said securities, and one is crippled and pretty good-for-nothing physically and yet really wants to live, it is a shock.

I do not know whether I fainted or just dreamed awhile, for the next I knew the shadows were getting long, and Nosey coming to have tea with me found me, as she thought, dead.

But dear me, no! very much alive was I when finally I could get back to earth and things mundane, and I relieved my mind in good round terms anent bank presidents who made 'way with other folks' property, until the remembrance came to me of what he had made 'way with of his own,—his life! Then I said no more.

The next week was one of mixed emotions. I ran the gamut from absolute, abject fear of the penniless future to an exaltation of courage that made me fairly drunk. Only touched the happy medium on Saturday, almost a week after, when I downed my fears and decided that from the great Universal Storehouse I could draw to myself sufficient to keep me in the simple way I demanded, if I would only believe sufficiently and visualize strongly enough. So, as I had determined that my "means" was to be my work for the woman's exchange, I brought to my mind the picture of crowds of well dressed women pressing about the counter buying boxes of every conceivable kind, shape and material; trays ditto, and painted menus, panels and scrap baskets, all the work my own,—buying, buying, buying. And that picture I visualize at least four times during the twenty-four hours. In the meantime I am working hard to have a good supply of articles finished for the holiday trade, at which time I think my demand upon the Universal will be answered.

My rent is paid (in furniture) up to Feb. so really there is *nothing* to worry about, and as I firmly believe

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

that I shall be able to earn my living I do not intend to act as though I did not by doing any differently from what I have done.

The expense account is really not very staggering. I will put down last month's just as a sample. Of course in winter I must add at least six dollars for coal and wood.

Meat, Flour, Butter, Eggs, Sundries .	\$10.00
Tea, lb. Formosa Oolong . . . . .	1.00
Coffee, lb. . . . .	.40
Milk, . . . . .	3.00
Extras, . . . . .	1.00
	<hr/>
	\$15.40

That covers absolutely all my expense for materials for meals. Then for some of my cooking and for my drop-light I use gas, which makes another three dollars, so that twenty dollars really more than covers my living expenses and my washing. I do all of my small washing myself and, as we are all poor together down here, I hang it to dry on my balcony, in nice weather, where the sun does its work quickly and well. In bad weather I just hold on to my patience and wait a day or two, not being absolutely devoted to Monday as washday.

My half-dozen magazines I carefully take to pieces, keeping any articles I want to re-read by stitching the sheets and putting them into a cover. The others I likewise stitch and cover and send to the Salvation Army rooms across the street, or to the Sunshine Society.

As I had made a club list last year most of my magazines are paid for up to Jan. Then, well by then I can put my hand into my pocketbook and pay again. I *know* I can.

The second week after I had heard of the loss of my small "moneys" one day I felt that same peculiar sen-

## CHUMS

sation of warmth and prickling at the base of my spine, and as it recurred during the succeeding days often, I sent a note to Dr. Holding, asking him to come to me when he could.

He came and I told him about it. He tapped and sounded, pinched and twisted me until he hurt me and I said "Oh!" At which he said, "Where did I hurt you?"

I told him and he proceeded to do it again. Whereat I objected strenuously and he then told me that for some quite unaccountable reason circulation was beginning in the bad leg and thigh and that there was just a chance that I might get back the use of them and of my back, which, though not so bad, as bad backs go, still is nothing to brag about.

I just yelled with delight and thanked my stars that I *had* those legs to get renewed circulation in. Suppose they or one of them had been taken off as poor Ann's was.

The doctor says that what looks like a miracle is nothing but my resolute determination to do for myself in every way possible, which has kept up a certain amount of activity. This reaching up and down and over was the best thing imaginable. And then this recent stirring up I've had, aided.

I looked a bit stubborn there and the Dr. laughed and said,—

"My dear Hilda, would you not give up several times fifty a month to get back to your health?"

"Of course I would. But because my back tickles and my flesh rebels when you twist it does not absolutely prove that my legs are going to be good serviceable ones again," I retorted.

"All right. Wait and see. Possibly that is the best way to do."

Whereat I, womanlike, turned about and was all for hoping the best.



## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

That was a month ago. So far no very remarkable improvement. Only yesterday my littlest toe itched and tickled like mad. I had to call Nosey to come and scratch it for me.

About five weeks ago I had a letter from Thirla:—

### "CROSS ROADS.

I have thought over my plan, dear chum, and it seems good to me. This is it:—

When the summer comes, the early summer, say June, let us go to the seashore, you and Ann and I, together. Now don't make big eyes, as the children say, wait until you hear.

My aunt, the Boston one who wanted me to remain with her at my father's death, has recently died and left me her summer home on the Maine coast near Bangor. It is only an old fashioned farmhouse, but comfortable and roomy. I remember it well, for we spent our vacations there. And I loved it.

The farm just about keeps itself, with a trifle over, and has a dear old couple to look after it. As long as they live they are to have the use of the farm. So here I am, the so-called owner of a farm I cannot sell, cannot rent, cannot, in fact, do anything but live on.

The Aunt left me, likewise, two thousand dollars and the advice "not to be stubborn, but to give up that wild land (meaning the region about the Cross Roads) and go and be comfortable at Pine Tree Farm."

Now, will you both be my guests for five months next year and let me pay for your trip to and from there? Possibly, if we all are happy, you might make it a year and see me through the bleak Maine winter, or I might go back to New York with you and we all have rooms on the same floor at Mrs. Grossburg's.

I am taking it for granted that you will say yes and I find myself making plans for the lovely summer days when we can be out on the beach all day.

## CHUMS

I shall take Winnie, the old Indian woman who has been my particular guardian angel all of these years. And Mrs. Thomas, at the farm, will supply in the person of a nice, strong young niece of hers, the maid for you and Ann. You two are such superior persons with your crutches and activity that you do not need what I do.

I am so, so happy at the possibility of seeing you two dear women, that I am like a different person. Oh, my dears, my dears, I was a lonely woman until you two came into my life.

The chance to carry out such a plan, of course, came only with aunt's death, but I hope she knows how great a joy this will be to me, and someway I fancy she does.

To get through this coming winter will be the rub. I must be busy every minute, so that I can by May 5th be ready to go to Pine Tree Farm.

In my next letter I will tell you about it. I have some old photographs, taken oh! years and years ago, but Mr. Thomas tells me that the saplings are now great trees and that the old stones of the house are nearly covered with ivy and creepers, for it is in a deep dip of land and sheltered beautifully on three sides by the woods, with the ocean in front.

Yours in great happiness,

THIRLA.

P. S. I suppose to a possessor of a great country house the small Maine farm would not seem much, would it? But the happiness the thing has brought to me is beyond words."

Then I had a letter from Ann. Here it is.

"Hilda dear, Doubtless you have had a letter from Thirla.

Can't you smell the salt of the breeze and the pine of the woods? I can. And I have a very clear picture of

## THE DIARY OF A "SHUT-IN"

us three out on the beach under big umbrellas with our luncheons, a book, and our work, talking, working, reading the long summer days through. Can't you hear the cow bells at evening when the cows come home along the lane? Can't you taste the fresh milk? Can you not fancy sleeping out at night somewhere where all of the sweet night scents of pine and sea and earth wrap one around?

Yes, decidedly,—I for one will not be too proud to accept that invitation, but I wonder if it really can be! The day for such joys I fancied was over for me. How little we know, and the funny thing about it is, that all this past summer, during the fiercely hot days and hotter nights, just such a picture haunted me. I saw it all so clearly that I could forget the smells and dirt and discomfort of the Alley and actually live at that other place.

I want to say a word here about your *lost dollars*. I was so sorry for you, for the feeling of comfort an income, no matter its amount, gives, is hard to realize until the income takes wings. Poor dear! But you have certainly taken the right attitude.

Your theory of 'visualization' interests me. What is the book you referred to in your last letter? Can it be obtained at the library? If so, I will ask Martha Holding to get it for me. You see I allow all of these dear people to 'obtain merit' through me. They most cheerfully run errands for me, bless 'em!

I won't write any more just now, for I gave my arm a terrific knock today and it feels queer.

Yours,

ANN."

I have just finished a most delightful book of François Coppée's. What charm he has. After the more or less psychological and analytical novels one reads to take up books like his *Les Vrais Riches* and *Toute Jeunesse* puts one in a mood to believe that "all certainly is good in



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this best possible of worlds," that there is "tenderness and truth, loyalty and deep affection." As there is. Who knows that better than I do?

The weather is as usual "very unusual for the time of year," so mild, so summerlike, that we all as a neighborhood still patronize the front steps and curbs. I still just about live on my little balcony. My! but I shall miss it when winter comes.

A week or so ago the Salvation Army woman, she of the sweet smile, came over to thank me for some booklets I had sent them and we had a most delightful talk. When she left it was four o'clock, and she laughingly said that she should have to order herself a penance to make up for so much pleasure. That was no nice, and she meant it too.

She told me so much I wanted to know about philanthropic conditions and problems. She has a tremendous admiration for Maude Ballington Booth and she said that she believed that woman did more actual good by her work, teachings, life and example than any one hundred of the so-called leaders of the higher life; of course that brought up a discussion as to the values of the various philanthropies, their methods and results. I find Captain Saunders a most intelligent and broad minded woman, a woman of great common sense, and one who has, she tells me, come out into the sunlight from the very depths of darkness. I wonder what? For certainly there is left no faintest shadow. Her face is placid and comely. I like that old fashioned word.

There are faces which show terrible traces of the soul struggle; fallen, broken tissues; haggard, dulled eyes; hair thinned away from the face. Those faces are tragic to me. There is one such among the Salvation band across the way. I have been haunted by it. Beautiful it has been. Beautiful it is today to me. I must ask the Captain about her.

The old Colonel and I,—he, by the way, is only sixty-

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six, I had thought him many years older,—are become great friends and he drops in to tell me his various bits of news.

He is a great man to frequent the parks. Loves the greens and quiet and, too, the sight of the people who go past. I think the Colonel really is a gregarious chap and this past summer he had such an experience! He suddenly discovered that his room was alive with bed-bugs and, as he is the very perfection of bodily cleanliness, it distressed him fearfully. The news nearly sent Nosey into convulsions of horror, for her pride is her clean house. So, after he had confided his woes to us, he and Nosey, armed with proper appliances, cleaned that room. The bed, an old fashioned wooden one, Nosey cleaned thoroughly and then gave away to old Nanny the apple woman, and bought a nice, clean, new enamelled one. Every rag of bed clothes and curtains, carpet and rug were scoured, all of the floor and woodwork gone over, and then the fear that some might have got away and gone visiting so bothered Nosey that before she rested from her labors every room, closet, staircase and wall had been cleaned, and for ten days we were all afraid to light a match fearing instantaneous blowing up, the fumes of coal oil, benzine and some other powerful thing were so strong.

Midge was much disgusted and refused to go into the hall, and after the second day the Colonel went a-visiting himself, fairly driven out. But he's back again. He is really a delightful old fellow and from his tramps he comes laden always with boughs and branches. Latterly it has been leaves that were just beginning to turn, so that at all times my room has its suggestion of out-of-doors.

Jennie Wren had for some time been rather pensive, an unusual thing for her. I, thinking it the effect of her refusal of Jimmy, said nothing about it and one day last week she unbosomed to me.

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It seems she is worrying over a question of ethics.

There is a girl in her shop who appears to be coming down with consumption, lungs badly affected, and the doctor has ordered her off to California before the winter set in. Now the girl has nothing put by, and an old grandmother dependent upon her, so it looks as though she will just have to stick to her post.

Jennie, with her consciousness of her eight hundred dollars' savings for that longed-for trip, cannot be happy. Feels that she ought to give it to the girl to go to California with, and she is making herself sick over it. Through long, long years this trip has been her hope. For it she has saved and scrimped, gone without everything but barest necessities, and now that she sees the little pile of savings reaching the highwater mark of her plan—to have this direct appeal to her conscience and sentiments made! I did not, dared not advise, but I just had a good weep after Jennie went, a weep for her, for I somehow feel that the trip will not be. Of course I am sorry for the sick girl too; it's a great thing to be able to give a soul its chance to work out much in this incarnation, a privilege—all *that* I know in the abstract; but the picture that haunts me is the figure of Jenny coming along hippity-hop, hippity-hop on her crutches. Her poor, plain clothes and her lovely face, and her long, long years of saving—Ach! I must give up thinking over it. It is a case where 'tis hands off.

Nov. 30TH,—Another few weeks without writing in my diary. Lucky I never made any promises to myself to “write daily.”

Thanksgiving we had a jolly time. Jennie and Jimmy, Mr. Vail and I. Nosey sent in the turkey, bursting with stuffing and browned to perfection. We roasted our own sweet potatoes and we started our spread with stewed oysters, deep sea boys in big shells stewed in their



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own juice, a contribution from Jimmy. Mr. Vail furnished the mince pie, bought at the woman's exchange, (and *good*) and a bottle of sherry, which we each took a glass of before dinner. The remainder I put away to send to old Nanny who loves a bit of stimulant, although she would much rather it were gin, I fancy.

It was a proper Thanksgiving day, cold and sharp. I, of course, know how suitable such weather is, but I cannot help thinking of the poor pinched faces, the red, cracked hands, the inadequate clothing and general misery, and it seems selfish to be so comfortable. As usual I have commenced at the tag end of my story.

Well, about five weeks ago Jennie dropped in on her way up stairs one evening and I persuaded her to stay for supper. I had a ducky little pot of pork and beans and a baked pudding.

After dinner she grew confidential and told me that she had that day drawn out of the bank six hundred dollars, bought tickets for the girl and her grandmother to Los Angeles, tourist, and given them the remainder of the money to live on. They claimed that it would keep them easily a year, and as the girl got stronger she could get some work. She knows her trade and is a good seamstress besides.

I drew a long breath after Jennie had finished telling me. Then I leaned over and hugged her. I could not for the life of me say a word, but she understood and we sat looking into the fire until the Trinity bells sung ten.

Now that was as big a piece of self-abnegation as I remember ever to have seen. And the Jennie girl is once more her old merry self. No sighing martyr to conscience this, but a good little fighter who won't let her disappointment spoil things for herself or for others.

Had a couple of letters from Thirla, but I can copy only one here as Ann borrowed the other and has not returned it.

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### "CROSS ROADS.

I was so relieved to get your and Ann's letters saying that you would accept my invitation for next summer, Hilda dear, and let us make it May 15th instead of June 1st. I will leave here on May 1st. I wish I dared make it earlier, but I want it to be well within the grip of summer when we arrive for this first trip. Possibly later we may have various seasons, for I have the feeling that the Pine Tree Farm is to harbor us often during these next years. My feeling amounts to a belief.

My sister and the youngsters lifted horrified eyes at the bare thought of my attempting such a journey, but I have overruled every objection and with Winnie to attend to me and a strong armed young nephew to help in changing cars, I can do it as easily as can be.

I have come to the conclusion that many of us "shut-ins" let ourselves drift into more hopeless and helpless invalidism than is necessary, oftentimes, and I do not propose to be one of that number.

Winter is here again,—not quite here, but just beyond the corner. I shall not mind it so much this year having your and Ann's letters to look forward to, and the planning for next summer, but I don't mind owing to you that for years past I have had a yearly fight to keep my serenity and cheerfulness during those long, long weeks and months. You would laugh at some of my expedients. But *now*, oh, the months will fly.

Amongst other things I am going to make us some perfectly stunning negligées, so that we can be a pleasure to each other's eyes.

Won't it be a soulful time when we three lone, lorn women meet, brought together so queerly?

Am very interested over your little Jennie Wren. Fancy giving up that long planned trip, after saving for ten years for it! Now, that was really a piece of heroism. I think you would better ask her to take her vacation with us at the farm next summer. There is heaps

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of room. It is a great old place like the proverbial omnibus and has attics a regiment could find quarters in.

I only wish I could ask some more people. It seems selfish to have that big place all to ourselves, when there is ample room and ample food (of the plainest but so good) to be had, don't you think so? But anyway we three will first have a full month to get acquainted in, acquainted with the look of each other and the sound of each other. Other acquaintance we have.

I am in a sort of exalted mood, 'strung-up' my practical sister calls it and threatens nerves and breakdown. I know differently. Never felt better in all my long years of laid-upness.

Our new barn is finished and the new wagon-sheds, looking very brave in their coat of clean red paint. Red barns are *de rigor* out here. They are the spot of cheerfulness on the landscape, when said landscape consists principally of lead colored sky and snow covered ground, with a line of dark, mournful green woodland in the distance; that lasts days and weeks, only changing in gradation of lead color.

Likewise, there is a fine new pump and trough painted a vivid green. That was the doing of one of my nephews whose sense of color is queer, and the joke comes in in the fact that he thought it blue. However, it gives a sort of Dutch effect to the landscape and is eminently cheerful.

It looks very much as though two of our young people would set up homes of their own very soon and I shall urge that the weddings be arranged for April, somewhere about the last, then I can slip away May 1st, on the tag end of the domestic cyclone.

We are going to have a regular old fashioned Christmas this year. The sisters and brothers of the two who are soon to marry our girls are coming for a week. Six in one family, four in another; that added to our lot, ten, and eleven sometimes, brings it up to twenty. Quite a



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family to feed. So there will be great fattening of turkeys and ducks and geese and much making of apple butter, mince-meat and suet puddings, old fashioned ginger bread and molasses cake and a cake called pork cake, —not an appetizing name, but a most delectable cake. The work won't be increased, for out in this country all of the youngsters are taught to do their share and so the visitors will for the nonce be the family and work with them.

Evenings there will be great larks. The carpet has been taken up in the parlor and the boys are shaving wax candles over the floor and then dancing. After a week of that the floor will be like glass. The fire-board will be taken out of the great chimney-place and the big opening will have its andirons and tongs, bellows and shovel, and there will be fires that will warm the big room to its uttermost corners.

The piano is a trifle tin-panny, but after eight youngsters have for thrice that number of years thumped on it, could one expect otherwise?

The big square bed-rooms, each with its one or two four-post bedsteads in it, and the big wardrobes and spindle-legged dressing-tables will be filled to overflowing. Some will have to sleep in straw-filled ticks upon the floor.

All day at intervals come gusts of hot spicy fragrance from the kitchen, for it is getting ready for Thanksgiving and although we will make this but a light feast in view of the fact that Christmas is to be such an orgy, still it must have its fitting celebration. We dwellers on the outer edges of life cling more faithfully to the old habits. We never become surfeited with too much social life and so when any legitimate excuse offers, such as birthdays, New Year's, Thanksgiving and Christmas, we seize them and ride our forty and twenty and even sixty miles to be with our kind.

My sister is sending you a barrel of home goodies.

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They go today. There is something inside for Mrs. Grossburg, with my love.

Yours,

THIRLA."

And I had a letter from Ann I must put in.

"DEAR HILDA WOMAN,—

I want to have a little Christmas in our tenement this year and will you help with the work?

I know that you are awfully busy but I also know that you contemplate doing some net candy mittens and stockings for the settlement so I am going to be selfish and ask you to do it for me instead.

I've planned the jolliest kind of a time, one that will live in the annals of Cat Alley. I am tired of its having a reputation only for fights and murders and now that I have made friends with so many of the people and they seem to like me I am going to use that influence to make the poor things, for once, have a decent, sane and home-like day.

You remember my telling you of a Mrs. Hockins and a Mrs. Beatty who, when they were not throwing pails of slops over each other, were tearing each other's hair out by the handful? Well, I have got them to head my committee and share the responsibility of orderliness in halls and rooms, and this is how I did it. Mrs. Hockins had come in to bring me a roast sweet potato the other night and as usual, after a minute, she got the conversation around to the misdoings of our neighbor, Mrs. Beatty, and she showed me her head where the hair had literally been torn out. I said 'yes, Mrs. Beatty told me about it, and she said after she had gone back to her room she couldn't take her eyes off the chunk of hair, it was so pretty. So, not liking to throw it away, she put it up on her chest of drawers, under her glass globe.' Mrs. Hockins got as red, almost, as the color of her gorgeous hair.

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'Glory be!' she said, 'why the poor creature, did she, now!' and I could see that the thing had made a deep impression on her, for Mrs. Beatty's glass globe is the marvel of the house and the neighborhood and takes the place of a cabinet. All her treasures go under it.

Then, next day as Mrs. Beatty came in to borrow a couple of handfuls of coal and commenced telling me of the latest quarrel with Mrs. Hockins I told her what Mary Hockins had said one day after one of their fights, when she was relating to me how she had knocked out two of Jane Beatty's teeth,—

'That it was a real pity, so it was. Such elegant, white, sound teeth. None could near 'em in the Alley.' Whereat Mrs. Beatty put her hand up to her mouth where the two gaps in her teeth were, and said,—'Now, will you listen to that' and looked as gratified as could be.

Yesterday at six I was going to get my kettle filled at the hall faucet when I saw Mrs. Beatty carrying what looked suspiciously like 'the can' into Mrs. Hockins's room and later there was much merriment and a strong odor of fried onions and liver, so I know that the enmity is a thing of the past. But is it not funny? I laugh every time I think of it, and yet each *had* said the one *nice* thing, so I *could* repeat it.

Now this is my plan. The top floor, just above me is a big, low-ceiled floor and it only has two tenants. We are going to decorate it with greens, heaps of greens. I have got Mike Hill and Jimmie Ootings to promise to take their clan over to Jersey and get the evergreens and berries. I have a permit from Mr. Ferguson for entrance to their land. And then we are going to have a huge Christmas tree, also from Mrs. Ferguson.

Everyone who can work will be given a task, so that a sense of proprietary interest will be felt. The youngsters will pop the corn and fill the mittens, and string the corn for the garlands. For the spangly trimmings I



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have the next in size already interested. What girl, or boy, for that matter, ever could refrain from working with bright silver and tinsel paper? And I've a whole bushel of the biggest, reddest apples, ready to be polished and hung up, and I shall have at the right time enough oranges to go 'round, and a few over. The candles I shall ask donations for.

Every one in the house is to lend any and everything in the way of dishes for the Christmas dinner-table and contribute anything he or she or they can, if it is but a handful of sweet potatoes.

The turkeys are promised, eight of them, all cooked and piping hot from the settlement kitchen. (The workers, you see, applaud my idea.) And the cranberry sauce is a donation from a country friend. Likewise, pies of all kinds and conditions.

The house people will, for probably the very first time in their lives, have the feeling that it is a home festivity.

Of course, I shall fill in better than I have written. This is but the outline of my plan. There shall be 'lash-ins and larins' of coffee well sweetened and creamed, and of tea. No other beverage. And after the dinner is over and the Christmas tree is enjoyed I have a stereopticon entertainment for them. I borrow for the night the outfit of an old friend.

Now, will you make those mittens and stockings? Catch the edges with thick crimson wool, so they will look festive.

I am going to have this house a house where there is no fighting, where the inmates take a pride in it,—first step towards that was when I got them to keep their stairs and hall clean,—and where, even though we be so poor that we often have but a baked potato and pinch of salt for a meal, yet be we decent, self-respecting folk.

Next year I shall have this same Christmas doings, and every single thing shall come from ourselves. No charity. You'll see!"

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I spoke to Mary Tobin about Ann's plan and she said that it was good and that what Ann had accomplished in the year that she had lived there was wonderful, that the people in the house went to her for sympathy and advice in every crisis of their lives.

Mary Tobin has changed so greatly. She has grown so much softer, lost a lot of that rather assertive manner. I told her so and she laughed good naturedly.

"It's the baby, my dear," she answered. "Having that blessed mite has done all sorts of wonderful things for me. Why, if she were really my very own I could not love her more." Nice woman, Mary.

I see by the date that it is ten days over a year since I started my diary. I wish now that I had kept it more faithfully for such a number of things that I have forgotten to put down have occurred, and I do not want to forget them.

DEC. 28TH,—All of my boxes, trays and scrap baskets sold, which has given me courage to face this next year's incomeless condition. With necessity, has grown my inventive faculty. I really was rather proud of my pretty truck, and it was all beautifully well done. Not, distinctly not amateurish, but very craftsmanlike. So I can see the wolf turning tail and disconsolately moving on, thanks be!

It has been the busiest time I can remember, every second utilized, and the consequence is much accomplished in various ways. Beside the net mittens and stockings, of which we made and filled with candy and popcorn two hundred, I did some sewing. This time it was dressing dolls. Mrs. Ferguson had contributed three hundred dolls and the material for clothes. We turned out babies, brides, travelling spinsters and some of the dearest old grannies. I painted some lines on their faces and replaced the wigs with gray hair and caps and painted spectacles on them, and they were quite evidently the

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favorites. That was quite a work, but Jennie Wren helped with the dolls, and Jimmy and Mr. Vail with the popcorn and the mittens, so we were all ready and waiting with our contribution when the boys came for them.

Then I have been given a great delight: Mr. Grossburg has had my little balcony glassed in, so I can have some plants in it and on sunny days I can sit out there, for the glass holds the heat astonishingly, and it is so cheerful to be able to see all of the bustle of the street.

We have three new little shops opposite, bright, clean little places. One with all kinds of Italian food stuffs, is most artistically arranged, and directly next is a fruit and vegetable shop, and next that a macaroni shop. I never realized how many varieties of macaroni there were, or how variously tinted. The very day after the shop had opened and its window was arranged I became macaroni hungry; I sent for some of the deep, butter-colored kind, I made with it a dish I had long ago learned to make, and that night Jennie took supper with me and we ate every morsel of it, with a couple of baked apples for dessert, and felt as satisfied as though we had eaten a seven-course dinner.

We find that Mr. Grossburg is a most kindly and intelligent man, well read in all of the authors we care for. So after our regular music is finished there is always a little spread and much cheerful talk, and when we separate for the night each realizes a sense of its having been well worth while. Dear old Nosey is as happy as can be and mothers the two little step-daughters to her heart's content. I shall miss them all when the day comes for them to move, but I am more and more getting into a way of self-dependence—only my bath. That is as yet the great difficulty and I must have a clean body, though I be crippled and poor. My little Jennie Wren is a joy to me, she is so daintily fresh and clean always. Ann Clancy is, too, and how she can live in Cat Alley! and do what she does—be really intimate with those poor



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things—is a marvel to me, but her very example has done wonders, Mary Tobin tells me, just as did that of the little Duchess. In fact, it would almost seem that the little Duchess is to have a fitting successor in Ann.

Mary brought Estrella to see me, and it was a sight to see Mary with the baby. All of the motherhood that lies dormant in most women's natures, is to the fore and Mary's strong, rather heavy face has become beautiful. Queer things, we women.

The barrel of farm goodies came duly and I sent half of everything to Ann and then gave half of my share away to various of our house folk. Everything tastes so good and comes as a great treat after market-bought things.

The strange itching and tickling goes on and I can now move two toes. I am almost afraid to hope, but oh! if it should mean even partial recovery, just enough so that I can get about on crutches, what thankfulness I shall feel! Just enough so that I need not be dependent upon anyone for anything.

Mary Tobin reproved me today for saying that. She said it seemed to her that, by that attitude, I was creating a limitation. So now I am going to affirm absolute health, then see what occurs. In the meantime, I shall keep extremely busy trying to help myself.

Jennie Wren has heard from the consumptive girl whom she sent out to Los Angeles. She and her grandmother are at South Santa Monica, living in what sounds like a sort of fairyland house, a tent with trellised roses and heliotrope covering it, up on a hillside, facing the water and the setting sun, and are as happy as can be and hopeful, and grateful! Jennie does not regret her lost European trip.

Midge is so funny just now. Her hair has grown again and covered her bowleggedness and hump, and she is so proud. Has taken to her old tricks of admiring herself in the glass by the hour, and every afternoon I put

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a bow on her and let her sit up on a chair in the glassed-in balcony, where she watches with as much interest as her mistress does the comings and goings of the neighborhood.

Captain S. has been twice more to see me. She never talks religion, in the sense of theology, but only the religion of helpfulness, and I enjoy her hugely; and such tales as she has to tell. She sees human nature at its lowest depths as do the settlement people, but she, as they, brings such funds of common sense, of tenderness and of understanding to bear on all of the problems.

I cannot quite make out how she came to be Salvation Army, though. Possibly I shall hear some day. I hope so. I love to know the whys and wherefores of things.

I laughingly told her one day of my "menus," of which the workers have had another lot printed. I call them "How to be nourished pleasantly on next to nothing a day." She was immediately interested and I gave her one of the pamphlets to take along. She too finds it a hard problem to make the people realize that much can be done with little, used intelligently.

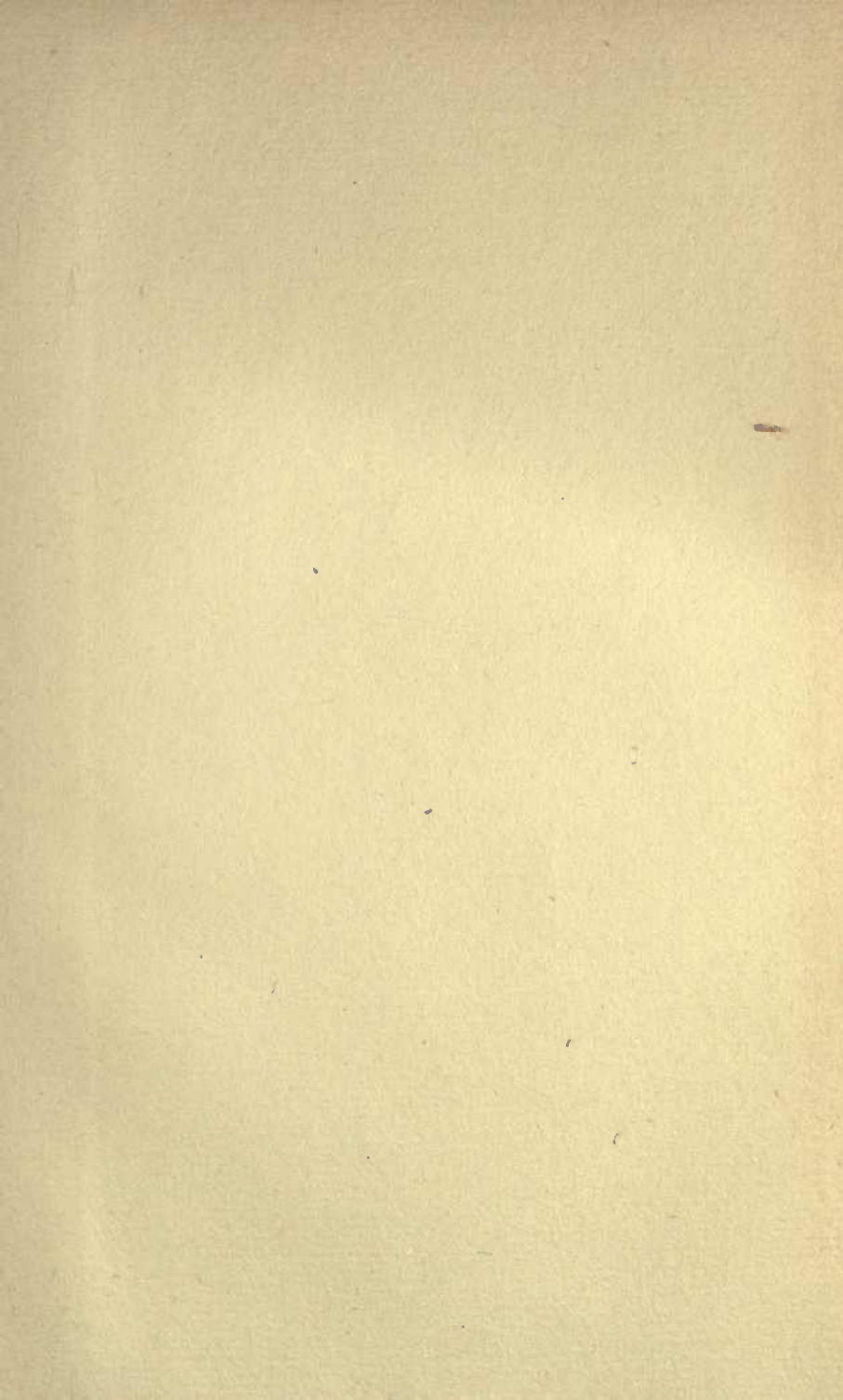
"The poor things can go without, but they have not the remotest idea how to make the most of little," she said. "That is, the people whom we reach and try to help. It's literally starve today and tomorrow and then, if a little windfall comes, buy the wrong kind of food material, the dearest and most wasteful."

She was very amused with my description of how I came to know Thirla and Ann, and over our plans for next year at the Pine Tree Farm. I can hardly believe it possible that in only four months more I shall see Thirla, and that Ann, Thirla and I shall really be together to spend long happy days. I told Jennie about Thirla's invitation for her to spend her vacation with us and she was so delighted.

I shall start my new diary next month.









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